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CPJ protests B.C.'s referendum on aboriginal issues

Alan Doerksen

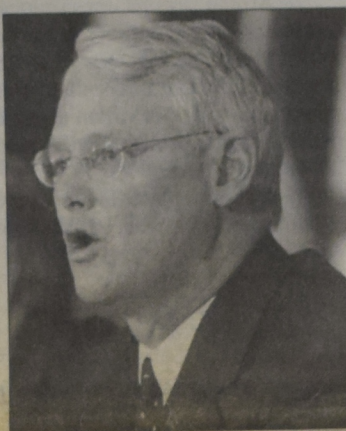
NORTH VANCOUVER, B.C. — The B.C. government is running a referendum in May which could threaten the rights of that province's aboriginals and disrupt treaty negotiations currently under way, according to Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ).

The referendum, which must be mailed in by May 15, asks six questions related to aboriginals, and leaves room for only Yes or No answers. CPJ is urging its supporters to leave all questions unanswered except for question 6, which states: "Aboriginal self-government should have the characteristics of local government, with powers delegated from Canada and B.C."

CPJ argues for a No vote, in a

press release to supporters, because: "the question is based on the assumption that aboriginal self-government can only occur at the pleasure of the federal or provincial legislatures. It attempts to establish a template for all treaties.... It violates Premier [Gordon] Campbell's promise that the referendum's questions would not define or interfere with constitutional rights.... A Yes vote would violate the Constitution by defining and limiting the right of self-government. In our federal system, the province has no right to define aboriginal rights."

"More importantly," argues CPJ, "the question disregards the basic claim of First Nations, which courts have affirmed repeatedly in different contexts: First Nations



B.C. GOVERNMENT PHOTO

B.C. Premier Gordon Campbell

were self-governing peoples before settlers arrived. Since they did not give up their rights to govern

their territories and were not conquered by force, they have the right to govern themselves...."

Could kill treaty process

"A Yes vote could kill the treaty [making] process. Many treaties have already been negotiated powers beyond what local governments have."

CPJ asks supporters to leave other questions unanswered partly because that "underscores the gravity of this question [#6] and serves to reject this referendum process."

Another contentious question states: "Private property should not be expropriated for treaty settlements." CPJ contends, "A Yes majority would alleviate non-native fears, but leaves little room for

negotiation where a native community is 'hemmed in' but trade-offs might be possible. What if a piece of property is all that's needed to settle a claim, but there is no willing seller? Or if a sacred site is on privately-owned land, and a First Nation would like to own it?...

"The implication of a No vote is that all private property is subject to appropriation. This is not the position of aboriginal peoples. Flexibility is needed, not a hardline position."

Question 8 of the referendum is also controversial, stating: "The existing tax exemptions for aboriginal people should be phased out." According to CPJ, "This question is particularly divisive, playing on

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Christian missionaries to Colombia weigh the costs

Dangers face those who choose to stay

Deann Alford

AUSTIN, Texas (Compass) — After Latin America Mission (LAM) missionaries Don and Elizabeth Sendek left Colombia last year on furlough, the government there broke off talks with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) rebels and took back territory ceded to the guerrilla group to entice it to the peace table. Now a hard-line candidate for May's presidential elections has emerged; if elected, many believe he will launch a no-holds-barred attack against rebels and those suspected of supporting them.

Terrorism, violence and kidnapping are on the rise. Many fear all-out war as fighting between FARC and ELN (National Liberation Army) rebels, right-wing paramilitaries and Colombia's army has escalated, and the U.S. has increased its military presence.

And now, three months before the Sendeks plan to return to their home in Medellin, Colombia,

where Don Sendek teaches in a seminary, the U.S. Embassy in Bogota has warned that American evangelical missionaries in Colombia's smaller cities and rural areas may be guerrilla targets. Even in Colombia's largest cities, American missionaries are on heightened alert.

Will it keep the Sendeks from returning as planned?

"Why should it?" Sendek said. "Aren't we in the Lord's service? If we listened to all the advisories, we would have been out of Colombia a long, long, long time ago. It doesn't affect us at all."

Refusing to leave

Sendek's take on the situation is like that of his fellow missionaries in Medellin, a city infamous for its violence. Those who haven't already fled after years of violence and kidnapping probably won't leave in the face of this latest threat.

"I think we're going to wait it



LATIN AMERICAN MISSION PHOTO

Missionaries Don and Elizabeth Sendek plan to return to Colombia, despite the dangers there.

out," said Kelly Green, a missionary with Christ for the City International (CFCI), based in Omaha, Nebraska. He and his wife, Cherie, have lived in Medellin for

three-and-a-half years. Guiding their decision is the legacy of missionaries to Colombia who stayed during La Violencia, a three-decade bloodbath that began in the

1940s. "Our plans are to stay until the Lord makes it clear that we're not supposed to be here. Most of the [missionaries] who felt otherwise have left already."

A rare cancellation

That doesn't mean that Green doesn't listen to Colombian Christian leaders. After word came of the embassy's March 4 advisory, he canceled plans to speak at a church in a working-class neighborhood in Medellin because both the church's pastor and CFCI's Colombia director advised him to do so. He said it was the first time he ever canceled a preaching engagement because of security concerns.

Andrew McMillan, a West Virginian of the Colombia-based Mission South America in Cali, pastors Christian Faith Community, Medellin's second-largest church. It's located on the line between working-class and middle-class neighborhoods. Four of his pastoral staff are from the

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News

'Safest place to be is in centre of God's will,' says missionary

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United States. He also hosts a half-hour weekly Christian television program called "Fresh Wind."

The same weekend Green opted not to preach, McMillan delivered his weekend sermons as planned. None on his staff plan to leave Colombia or their ministries, he says.

Receiving bomb threats

"I've not had any invitations to preach in any churches in any marginal neighborhoods, and I would probably think twice [before accepting an invite] because yes, there's a lot more guerrilla activity inside these neighborhoods," McMillan said. While his Medellin church and another he planted in Cali both received bomb threats years ago, "I've been down here 15 years and nothing's ever happened," he said.

Sendek says that, like Green and McMillan, he won't go into

some areas of Medellin that are known to be sympathetic to either leftist rebels or to rightist paramilitaries. Where he used to travel by bus to the northern city of Sincelejo, at the request of both his wife and the seminary where he teaches, he now flies.

McMillan said few American missionaries remain in Medellin, a city of three million, after a rash of bombings in the early 1990s prompted many denominations and mission groups to pull out their workers. He and Green said that most expatriates still in rural areas belong to independent Christian groups or churches. U.S. citizens are advised — but not required — to register with the U.S. Embassy when they enter the country. Sendek — who has never registered — has worked for 30 years in Medellin and said that he knows of no U.S. expatriate missionaries in Colombia who aren't living in

cities.

Adding to the potential for anti-American violence is the recent end of peace talks with the FARC, and the government's re-taking of a Switzerland-sized chunk of land ceded three years ago to the rebels as a "goodwill gesture" to coax them to the peace table. Bogota is also asking for more U.S. aid to fight its war on drugs, to which the American government promised more than \$1 billion. Many fear violence around the May 26 elections.

No place he'd rather be

McMillan says he doesn't have a hero complex — there's just no place he'd rather be than in Medellin. Should direct threats or violence occur, McMillan says he and his family probably will board a plane and leave.

"The safest place to be is the centre of God's will," McMillan

said. "I don't think I'm called to be a martyr. If I am a martyr, I'll open my eyes in heaven and say, 'Oops, I was wrong!' I'm just doing what I feel like God's telling me to do."

"If I get a direct threat, or my family does, hey, I'm going to obey Jesus' words: If they persecute you in one city, flee to the next. I'm just saying, we have a peace, and the harvest is so big we just can't leave it right now."

Chip Anderson, president of CFCI, said that the final decision on whether to pull the national and expatriate workers from Medellin — or from Colombia altogether — lies with ministry directors in each country in consultation with the missionary.

Sendek said of his sending agency, LAM, concerning its Colombia workers, "Our mission is one that has chosen to say there is money available if you chose to leave — emergency get-on-the-

plane-and-get-out funds." The mission largely has left the decision of whether to leave to individual missionaries.

Optimistic about future mission work in Colombia

Sendek, though, is optimistic about the future of expatriate ministry in his adopted homeland. "[LAM is] still selecting people as missionary candidates to Colombia," he said. He and his wife are planning to return to Medellin just days after the elections. Sendek still encourages people to visit them there.

Christian workers who choose to stay know it's a special calling.

"We're not looking at a situation in Colombia that will be getting less violent," CFCI's Anderson said. "It's going to get worse."

'The brothers are in danger, all of us'

An interview with Angel Pinto, pastor of the Church of God in Puerto Asis, Colombia

David Miller

In his 14 years as pastor of the Church of God in Puerto Asis, Putumayo, Colombia, Angel Pinto has had to walk a dangerous line between outlaw armies at war with one another. Marxist guerrillas of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) battle paramilitaries of the Auto-Defense Union of Colombia (AUC) for control of the rich, tropical region.

Putumayo supplies Colombian drug cartels with vast amounts of coca leaf, the raw material from which cocaine is produced. The outlaw army that can control Putumayo stands to reap enormous profits from the illicit drug trade.

Survived death threats

At least four evangelical pastors have died violently during Pinto's tenure. He himself has survived several death threats and a brief kidnapping ordeal. The dangers have intensified since the guerrilla war escalated following the breakdown of peace talks in February.

Nevertheless, Pinto and his family continue to live in Puerto Asis, a city of nearly 100,000 inhabitants. Their ministry includes broadcasting gospel messages to a besieged evangelical community through the church's tiny FM radio station and sheltering war refugees. Like evangelicals all over Colombia, the Pintos maintain

strict neutrality in the war, refusing to take sides but willing to share the love of Christ with anyone who comes to their door.

In early April, Compass Direct South America correspondent David Miller spoke with Pinto by telephone while Pinto was in Bogota briefing fellow pastors on the situation in Putumayo. Excerpts follow.

Compass Direct: Can you tell us what is happening at the moment in Puerto Asis?

Angel Pinto: In the armed conflict, the paramilitaries control the urban sector and the guerrillas the countryside. The guerrillas have laid siege to the city, blowing up communications towers and power lines. Communication is very difficult and energy is scarce. Food is also becoming scarce. We don't even have bananas to eat.

The brothers in the south of Colombia are in danger, all of us. We cannot collect offerings or tithes. We cannot leave our church buildings alone. We can't travel through the countryside. We are reduced to depression.

Compass: Are there gun battles in the city itself?

Four to five killings a day

Pinto: On average, there are four to five killings a day in the city. Obviously the government of Colombia does not publish this. The communications media make

up the information. Murders are selective. The Auto Defense forces (AUC) are highly organized. When they find out about people who go out to the countryside to collaborate with the guerrillas, they kill them.

Compass: Have there been casualties among the evangelical community?

Pinto: Yes. [The guerrillas] have murdered several brothers who live in the countryside. For example, last year they assassinated a highly regarded community leader because he would come to town to bring plantains and manioc to his pastor. Now they are killing other believers from Puerto Asis because they visit the countryside. It's like this: We townspeople can't go out to the country because we are "military targets." Farmers who want to come to town have to get permission from the guerrillas. It's very difficult.

Compass: Does it appear one group is winning the fight?

Pinto: It appears neither of the groups can declare victory, nor does one side seem to be losing. It's a game. They are fighting for territory.

Compass: Your church has opened a shelter for refugees fleeing the violence. How many people are you helping?

Pinto: We give aid to about 40 families. Dr. Maria Clemencia Silva from Bogota is helping us a great deal in this program, gathering funds and food and sending them to us by plane. Refugees receive food staples, hot meals, and

sometimes spend the night in the church. We have a small program in which we distribute food to the needy. In addition, about a dozen people come to the parsonage daily for meals.

Compass: Does the fact that you are helping war refugees put you in greater danger?

Helping refugees puts him in greater danger

Pinto: Yes, that's correct. I am under threat for helping refugees and displaced persons. By doing this work, I show that I am not in favor of the war, and the guerrillas say I am anti-terrorist. They have declared me a supporter of the state and a member of the extreme right.

Compass: Have you received threats from the AUC?

Pinto: No, not from the Auto Defense forces. In fact, they are trying to ensure public safety in the city.

Compass: How is your family doing?

Pinto: Well, my wife, Janeth, and my two children are mostly shut up in the house. My [19 year-old] son can't go out due to the risk of being forced into one of the armed factions. If he goes into the countryside, the guerrillas will abduct him. In the city, the paramilitaries would likely take him. He spends the whole day at home. He can't have a job, so he is helping out in the church as a radio announcer and musician.

Compass: What about the program of forced eradication of coca plants in Putumayo. Is that having

an impact on the evangelical church?

Pinto: It has affected the evangelical community to the extent that believers who have cattle or fields of manioc or plantains or corn are losing their crops. The (aerial) fumigation poisons the environment, the whole ecosystem. It damages fishing, agriculture and livestock, which in turn affects the economy. Pastors have had to move away. Some have left for Pasto and Cali, others are preparing to go.

Compass: With all the problems you are facing, have you considered leaving the area, too?

God blessed, protected him

Pinto: Well, I don't think so. God has blessed me a lot. He has protected me and added the work that I am doing with the radio station. The only thing I need at the moment is to increase the power of my transmitter, because now the brothers in the countryside are only able to hear the Word of God by radio. The transmitter is 80 watts and we need at least 250. That would be perfect.

Compass: In what ways can Christians from the international community help the believers in Putumayo face this crisis?

Pinto: They can help with medicines and food, because those are the things that are most scarce. Medications and foodstuffs are big needs.

News

B.C. referendum is unjust, says CPJ

... continued from page 1

existing hostilities and on voter ignorance of history. It also implies provincial powers that do not exist. Tax exemptions for aboriginal people are provided under the federal Indian Act. This Act is not within provincial jurisdiction, so the province does not have any say on this matter."

Meaningless and cynical

CPJ has three concerns about referendums, which it spells out in a press release:

- Referendums undermine elected, representative governments. They over-simplify issues and fuel divisions. Principled political leadership and intelligent debate are needed to resolve the issues we face, not simple referendum numbers.
- Referendums are particularly troublesome when they ask a majority to rule on the rights of a minority. This contravenes the basic premises underlying non-discrimination guarantees in international treaties.
- Referendums are meaningless and cynical when, as is the

case here, the government states that it will be bound by a Yes vote, no matter how low the vote turnout is, but will not be bound by a No vote.

In an open Letter to British Columbians, CPJ states: "All of us, aboriginal and non-aboriginal, have both rights and responsibilities. But many aboriginal people are still waiting to have their rights acknowledged, rights which have been upheld by the courts and the Constitution. The treaty negotiation process is an important way to affirm those rights. We all have a stake in this process. Negotiations leading to just treaties and a positive climate of reconciliation will foster peace in our province. They will also help foster a healthy economic climate, in which investors, companies and citizens will know what the ground rules are."

"Our public justice values lead us to oppose the referendum questions posed by the Campbell government. On the surface, the ballot questions may appear reasonable. However, they do not leave room for the flexibility that ongoing negotiations require. In some cases,



COURTESY CITIZENS FOR PUBLIC JUSTICE
CPJ's Donna Stewart

an affirmative vote would require re-negotiation of agreements already in place. In others, the questions implicitly challenge court decisions, the Constitution, or imply provincial jurisdiction where none exists."

An unjust process

Donna Stewart, of North Vancouver, is a member of CPJ's National Board and a co-author of that letter. "CPJ has been involved with aboriginal issues for at least 25 years," she tells *Christian Courier*. This is reflected in CPJ's concern about the referendum.

"The referendum itself seems to be an unjust process," she argues. "All of the questions are manipulative, implying things which aren't true." If the government got a majority Yes vote, "it would completely finish the treaty process," she asserts.

Because the B.C. government has said openly "a Yes vote will be binding, and a No vote won't — it's absolutely a no-win process," says Stewart.

Asked if CPJ's approach might allow the B.C. government to win a Yes vote, Stewart admits, "I think they're going to win it anyway." But she argues, "This is a protest vote which will be counted. It might give a visible protest."

Mennonite Central Committee has adopted the same tactics as CPJ with the referendum, explains Stewart.

Unusual history

B.C. is unusual in that "we haven't had treaties like in the rest of Canada" with aboriginals, Stewart observes. Looking briefly at B.C. history, she says the provincial government gave away

pieces of land as large as 360 acres to early homesteaders, and gave reserve land arbitrarily to aboriginals. Other non-native people simply took land away from aboriginals.

"It's very different from other parts of Canada. This has been a racist province," asserts Stewart.

In the late 1980s, B.C.'s Vander Zalm government worked out with the federal government a treaty-making process. "The negotiations have been going on for 10 years" with aboriginals, says Stewart. "It's a six-stage process. Some are at Stage 5. There are substantive agreements that have been made. It would be better to let the negotiation process continue. There have been results."

Stewart says she has expressed CPJ's concerns to the Campbell government, but got a reply saying, "We need firm guidelines." She responds, "They have firm guidelines. They don't appreciate the guidelines."

She suspects some non-natives in B.C. have a "fear of cash settlements. They don't want to share" with aboriginals.

A new era for religion in U.S.-China relations?

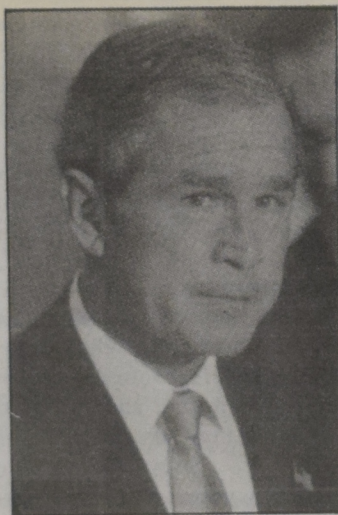
Compass — The recent visit by President George Bush to China has inaugurated "a new era in U.S.-China relations" according to Carol Hamrin, former China analyst at the U.S. State Department.

A poll of China researchers and house church leaders suggest that it has produced changes in the attitudes of the house churches and even in the human rights community. Compass lists seven new features brought about by Bush's forthright speech on religious freedom:

1. New debate about religion inside the Chinese government

Normally, to discuss religion in China was forbidden. Now, many Chinese universities have units dedicated to the study of religion. Reliable sources also indicate that at the highest levels of the Chinese Communist Party there is a debate about the role religion ought to be allowed to play.

In December, the Religious Affairs Bureau held a national conference (the first in 10 years) where the two political heavyweights of China — President Jiang Zemin and Premier Zhu Rongji — both gave major speeches. Said a China analyst, "This all sent a signal throughout the Chinese government



KHUE BUI
U.S. President George W. Bush is known as a "conviction politician," and is not bashful about sharing his evangelical faith.

that religion is extremely important. That's new."

2. New religious focus in U.S. domestic politics

George W. Bush is known as a "conviction politician," and he is not bashful about sharing his evangelical faith. He witnessed to Jiang Zemin, prayed with Kim Dae Jung, and pushes faith-based initiatives in domestic politics. According to a Chinese government source,

"We have to realize that religion is a major issue for the Bush administration — it's not just rhetoric, and this changes the complexion of the relationship considerably."

3. New sophistication in anti-persecution lobbying

According to one Washington insider, "The momentum that drove us to have the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act has dissipated because it was initially driven by anti-Clinton forces. But now that the Act is in place, the various actors are looking around and asking, 'How do we make this legislation bite?'" The result is that lobbyists, mission groups, and other organizations are re-thinking their strategy to be more effective in reducing persecution.

Said one insider from a well-known Christian ministry, "We used to just content ourselves with making a lot of noise where there was none before. But now that the issue has a higher profile in general, we have to move on to seeking ways to turn this into effective policy making."

4. New determination among house churches to fight persecution

Although it is hazardous to generalize about China's myriad house church groups, many of

them in recent years have geared themselves up to fight persecution legally. At a recent meeting of 50 house church leaders, members were given training in making legal appeals against false arrests. Said one, "It used to be that we would just accept persecution as from God, but now many of us are saying, 'Not all persecution is from God, and we should fight the charges of wrongful arrest, protest torture and so forth.'"

In this connection, a remarkable archive of 20,000 persecution cases has recently come to light through the efforts of a Chinese immigration lawyer, Li Shixiong. Also, family members of those arrested among the South China Church have sent a remarkable amount of documentation to the West about these cases, including affidavits, court records and charge sheets. This willingness to supply legal evidence to counter government accusations is extremely new in a persecution context. Suddenly there is an embarrassment of documentation where there was none before.

5. New interest in sending evangelists abroad from China's house churches

Since the mid-1990s, the conviction has been deepening among many house church leaders that the

Chinese church should be a sending church, assisting in spreading the Christian gospel worldwide. Many house church movements target the Middle East in particular, believing that Chinese people are more welcome there than Westerners. In addition, in the past couple of years more than 25 leaders of China's house churches have sought asylum in the West, fleeing the crackdown on cults. They are expected to begin to exert their influence among the hugely wealthy émigré Chinese Christian community.

David Zhang, leader of a massive house church centred in Fancheng, Henan province, said, "We are awakening now to the possibility that God has given us this revival to revive the church worldwide."

These changes and more are resulting in remarkable new dynamics as the Chinese church interacts with the rest of the world. It is indeed a "new era."

ENVIROtip...

(NC)—There are many detergents that are low-phosphate or phosphate-free. Phosphates get into lakes and rivers and cause excessive growth of algae and weeds that could destroy fish habitat.

— News Canada

Editorial

On a hilltop under a tree (not a fig tree)

Harry der Nederlanden

Wednesday. The middle of my last week of chemo. 10 a.m. The sun warm and bright but the air still nippy. Two nights ago, we covered all the flowers against the frost but today they're all leaping brightly at the sun. I'm headed toward the hospital, but when the turn-off comes, the van keeps going straight south. Straight for the hills. Despite my spring allergies, the sweet smell of earth's juices pumping up into the grasses, the flowers and the trees has seized on me.

A half-hour later I found myself sitting on the same hill from which I wrote a paean of praise to God's tangible presence in this world of hills and valleys, grasses and trees, birds and squirrels exactly one year ago.

God's healing presence

I recall feeling so good, so buoyed up, I felt wrapped about by God's healing presence. Yet, already at that time cancer was growing in my bowels, but I didn't know it. Still, over these twelve months that strong sense of presence hasn't left me. Not that I've been on some sort of remarkable spiritual high during the nasty routines of treatment and the long waits in hospital hallways. But they haven't been anything near the torment or trial I imagined they might be.

And in between the treatments whenever I felt a surge of strength, I've sought solace and renewal in

this landscape. After the big operation and before the chemo began, when the bare trees rose starkly out of the multiple layers of yellow, orange and red leaves that lay at their feet like raiments shed before bathing, Rose and I braved several miles of slick trails as dark skies threatened. It left me exhausted. But infused with hope.

Three or four weeks ago on a short outing, Rose and I counted 15 does in a field. Not a buck in sight. Probably sleeping somewhere, exhausted.

Delight and envy

The warm week we had in early April has coaxed lots of vigorous new blades of grass through the thick thatch of last year's dead grasses that insulate me from the cold earth beneath. A hawk circles lazily overhead, wings still, yielding himself to the air currents that carry him effortlessly higher and higher. The sight fills me with delight – and envy. Suddenly he dips, swoops and settles in a young ash a few yards away. He preens himself in the sun. Show-off!

Now the swallows take their turn carving spirals in the air, swooping, dipping, darting, skimming a metre above the ground. They must be targeting insects I can't see — other than the fat bumblebee trying to nudge me off his territory. Nearby, the still bare but dense thickets are atwitter with small birds. A cardinal flutes for a mate across the valley. And from another corner comes the strident caw-caw of some crow staking out his domain.

Far below I can see the burnished, pale yellow of dead reeds all flattened in one direction by snow and winter winds. There's no sound yet from the marshes, but they'll soon be throbbing with the throaty bass of frogsong and the falsetto of cricket choirs. The small figure of a man and his dog move along the main trail still visible through the trees. Some of the trees show no color whatsoever other than the purple grey of their twigs and branches, but most are crowned with a gossamer down of yellow or light green. Smack in the middle, like a ghostly bride kneeling in prayer, a single tree shows forth a dense bouquet of startlingly white blossoms. She turns all the other lacy trees into bridesmaids.

Next time I come here, I'll be looking down on solid masses of deep green as if the colors get piled on by a painter with a trowel.

The sun is warm, but the breeze chilly. Around me the stalks of dead thistles and other bristly, burry weeds tell me that in a few weeks it will even be difficult to walk here without getting snagged. Everywhere here slender stalks of tiny trees sprouting tiny reddish leaves are popping up through the grass. When I look closely, I see they are bristling with thorns three or four centimeters long. No, in a few weeks I won't be able to sit here. Nature is not a lounge chair or hammock.

Deep sense of quietude

Yet, coming here fills me with a deep sense of quietude, peace, perhaps even surrender. It seems a great privilege to be part of all this vast lively being and becoming. You feel rich just to be able to sit here and bask in the beauty of the day.

In fact, maybe you have to be rich to experience nature like this. Protected from its rigors and threats, and not required to wrest a bare subsistence from stingy soil and unpredictable weather, we can afford to

romanticize nature as comforter and healer. Despite our myths of native peoples living in harmony with nature, not long ago in this country nature effectively kept the human population quite low, killing off the young and the elderly in sufficient numbers to leave vast stretches of wilderness for hunting. They learned to respect that wilderness and the creatures in it not just because they were so high-minded or conservationist, but because at any moment it might kill them. We don't, thank God, have that kind of life-or-death relationship to nature. We come to it as tourists; we dip in our toes and retreat to our cities.

What wilderness exists now is by and large cultivated, saved as wilderness. A few generations ago, our ancestors hacked out a small, sometimes temporary, space of safety out of a wilderness that surrounded and threatened those cultivated spaces. Few if any of us could return to that sort of existence; singly, we are too fragile, too ignorant. Collectively, we would destroy our environment in no time. It could not sustain our huge numbers without our current technology. Our forefathers, and I include the forefathers of our first nations, did not live lives gentler toward nature. Quite the contrary. If all of us had to keep warm by burning wood in poorly insulated houses, the forests would quickly go up in smoke and we'd all be hacking our lungs out.

Nature is not a kindly mother

No, nature is not a kindly mother eager to nurse us. Those who speak of a nature red in tooth and claw and who focus on the careless indifference of nature to human life and ideals are not heard from very much in an age eager to save the wilderness and its creatures from human cultivation.

The same nature which speaks to and comforts my spirit also gave me cancer. And it also sets me to sneezing and wheezing every spring and fall.

In the final analysis, if some accident or some human act of violence does not kill us, nature will. The very life-giving rays of the sun can also breed cancer in us. Just like us, nature has a dark side. It is not our home; it is not paradise.

On the other hand, after all the radiation and chemo is over, my body, which is part of nature, will (I hope) enlist the healing power of nature to get me back up to strength. When I pray for healing, I'm asking God to direct nature in me toward its creational purposes – to nurture and sustain the children of God so that they may serve him and praise him.

So we need to sit on a hill occasionally and dream green, that is, we need to get "romantic" about nature and dream of a restored relation between heaven and the earth because it is part of our being made whole again.

This little area of my retreat called Short Hills is hardly wilderness. You can get lost in it, but only for a few hours at most. There are very few spots left on earth that are genuine wilderness in the old sense; if we do not cultivate and protect them, it will not be long before they are overrun and turned into raw material for some industry. And what we gain in goods will never recompense us for the loss, for the dream of a restored nature is not just in our human heads; it is there as power and promise in the grasses and trees bursting miraculously out of the cold earth toward the spring sun. God preaches to us also in the trees and the sunlight.

Christian Courier

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EDITORIAL TEAM & PRODUCTION STAFF

Editor: Harry der Nederlanden ccderned@aol.com;

Journalist, Layout Designer: Alan Doerksen

ccjournal@aol.com;

Circulation: Rose der Nederlanden ccsubscrip@aol.com;

Accounts Manager: Ineke Medcalf ccadpromo@aol.com

REGIONAL REPORTERS

Jeff Hoogendoorn, Victoria; Jacky Huberts, Langley, B.C.;
James Kwantes, Abbotsford, B.C.; Stephen VanHelden, Calgary;
Gordon Legge, Calgary; Jessie Schut, Edmonton;
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E-mail: cceditor@aol.com

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Letters

Evolution alive and well among North America

It is with interest I read that evolution's days are numbered (March 11, 2002). I don't know which campuses Michael Foust monitored, but I have news for him: evolution is alive and active in North American academia. Whether it should be depends on your point of view, and on whether one is dealing with the atheistic brand, *a la* Richard Dawkins, to mention only one, or the evolutionary creation kind as propagated by Howard Van Till, among others. A related hot topic is whether the Intelligent Design (ID) movement, described by Foust, is helping to resolve questions of origin.

Some questions left unanswered

"Design," like "creation," is a Scriptural notion, even though the Bible does not speak of "design" very often; when either word is used in the name of a movement, that movement will have to be assessed on its own merit. The Intelligent Design group has raised the origins debate to new levels, but it leaves some questions unanswered. Until these are addressed it is difficult to give ID whole-hearted support. Let me explain.

How does God interact with the world? That is an important question! Does He always follow the laws and processes of nature, so that we cannot perceive His specific actions, or does He sometimes act in miraculous, supernatural ways? In ways that we can detect, because ordinary scientific explanations fail? These are the questions ID asks and attempts to answer. But are they the right questions, or do they lead to a dualistic view of how God acts in this world?

When I read Job or Psalm 104, to mention only two passages, I am led to a different view. Even processes we understand ("The lions roar for their prey and seek their

food from God.") are upheld from moment to moment by God's providential care, by His intelligence. The idea that God inserts Himself from time to time into natural processes is not the God we meet in Scriptures.

Taking a different approach, the Intelligent Design movement makes a fundamental claim: "There are natural systems that are in principle incapable of being explained in terms of natural causes and that exhibit features that in any other circumstance we would attribute to intelligence." The opposite view, naturalism, can either be a philosophical version, which rules out any action by God, or a milder methodological version which states that scientists in their work do not look for evidence of God acting in ways that intrude upon the laws of nature. When processes are divided in this way, a dualistic view of God's action is the inevitable result.

The Intelligent Design group has three leaders who have garnered a lot of press. Philip Johnson is a lawyer who tends to rely on legal-type arguments. He divides biological thinkers into naturalistic, atheistic Darwinists, on the one hand, and Bible-believing, design-supporting anti-evolutionists, on the other. This kind of black and white thinking has caused his critique of evolution and naturalism to be less effective than it could be. Furthermore, Johnson has tended to lose support among scientists due to his lack of specialized biological training, and because he has shown little interest in this field or in any other relevant disciplines such as geology and paleontology.

William Dembski is a thinker who relies on philosophical and logical distinctions to make the case for intelligent design. Can ID be detected, he asks? To answer this question, a legitimate one in my opinion, is the self-imposed task in his research and

writing. He assumes that the design he detects could not have arisen by regular processes of nature. I would add that if this design could have arisen in this way, then Dembski and Van Till have a lot more in common than they ever could have imagined! But as it stands now, the ID position and evolutionary creationism are worlds apart.

It is ironic that the third thinker in the ID movement that I will mention, Michael Behe, allows for an incredible age of the earth, and a great deal of evolutionary change. Behe is the author of *Darwin's Black Box*, in which he suggests that cells exhibit "Irreducible Complexity." He states:

"By irreducible complexity I mean a single system which is composed of several interacting parts that contribute to the basic function, and where the removal of any one of the parts causes the system to effectively cease functioning. An irreducibly complex system cannot be produced gradually by slight, successive modifications of a precursor system, since any precursor to an irreducibly complex system is by definition nonfunctional."

According to Behe, subcellular structures, such as cilia or antibody molecules,

resemble a mousetrap in that components of these structures have no functions, and it's impossible for these structures to have arisen without their complexities fully in place. Researchers are challenging Behe, suggesting that molecular components of cilia can be found in some cells, doing other jobs. They claim that these components could have been co-opted to perform new functions in the structure of cilia. Thus, the irreducible complexity of Behe is, in fact, being reduced.

The complexity of biological molecules that fills us with awe and delight is fully worthy of the term design. Observing this complexity, we praise God for it, and for the beauty of it all. The way this complexity came into being is a legitimate topic of discussion and investigation, and should not be regarded as a black box. I would conclude that the debate on origins remains an active one, with Christians taking many different positions, including variants of evolution theory. Furthermore, it would be incorrect to suggest that evolution theory is losing ground in academic establishments in North America.

Harry Cook
Edmonton, Alta.

Sarcastic, snobbish hostility unbecoming

Bert Hielema's anti-American screed of March 11, 2002 should not go unanswered. At issue are not the debatable items (Kyoto, specific military hardware, Saddam Hussein etc.) but the general tone of sarcastic, snobbish hostility which is unbecoming in Christian journalism.

I find it hard to believe that Mr. Hielema can so easily dismiss the threat posed by international terrorism to freedom, to Western Civilization itself. As a Canadian living in the U.S., I am embarrassed by the all-too-frequent anti-American carping that comes from north of the 49th parallel. Particularly

when Canada, having let its military deteriorate to unconscionably low levels, simply rests secure in the protection provided by American military might. I can overlook European hypocrisy on this matter but as North Americans, Canadians ought to know better. There was a time when Canadians (and surely Dutch-Canadians!) appreciated and were willing to pay the cost of freedom. It is sad to see Canadians having become liberty moochers who keep biting the hands that protect us.

John Bolt
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Remembering Runner

Thank you for publishing "The Runner who did not grow weary" by Hendrik Hart of the Institute for Christian Studies, as well as the other Runner-related articles that appeared in your April 8 issue. They reminded me (and many others, I'm sure) of Dr. Runner's unique presence, powerful vision and special sense of biblical mission, particularly during the formative years in the life of various Christian institutions and organizations. They sought, and still seek, to make a qualitative difference by God's common people with an un-common practice in a largely secularized culture — a culture that is increasingly influenced by the un-Christian ideology of the so-called "common sense revolution," both at home and abroad.

Dr. Runner's insightful analysis and prophetic advocacy of educational, political, economic, and social ways of life rooted in the liberating Spirit of God's Word of Creation, Redemption, and Renewal were deeply encouraging and often quite moving — sometimes in more ways than one! His relentless promotion of the urgent need to develop actual alternatives, that could make a living difference for the "common good" and the well-being of all God's creatures

everywhere, greatly stimulated many of us.

Dr. Runner genuinely served among us, in various ways, as a motivating missionary. He steadfastly articulated his abiding conviction that Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and that a true way of life is really possible in living obedience to God's "always-active" Spirit of love, forgiveness, freedom, justice, and wisdom. Indeed, as we hear and live out of the Truth, we can think and act truly in the loving service of our ever-faithful God for all our neighbors' good.

As a humble Christ-follower who had heard and heeded the Good News of the Lord our Shepherd, Dr. Runner would thoroughly enjoy reading "The Shepherd's voice" by Beatrice Vandervelde in the same April 8 issue. Indeed, "The Lord lives. His voice resounds." Our friend Evan Runner would say, "Amen!" Thank you! Indeed, as Runner once put it: "God's little people (Kleine Luiden) should think big and act bravely in the life-giving power of the Resurrection!"

Gerald Vandezande
Scarborough, Ont.

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Environment

Scientists, religious leaders to discuss global warming

OXFORD, England (EP) — The threat of human-caused climate change will be addressed by an international group of scientists, policymakers, and religious leaders at an international Forum on Global Climate Change in Oxford, England, July 14-17.

The purpose of the conference is to increase awareness of the scientific evidence for global climate change and its likely impacts on human communities throughout the world, and to explore its religious and ethical implications. Participants will propose ways in which churches, scientists, industry, governments and individuals can respond effectively to this issue.

According to scientists, global warming occurs because of carbon dioxide and other gases released by human activities, especially fossil fuel burning and deforestation. These gases act like an insulating blanket around the earth, causing global average temperatures to rise.

Conference sponsors are the Au Sable Institute of Environmental Studies of the U.S. and the John Ray Initiative of England, two faith-based environmental education and stewardship institutes. Organizers of the conference are Sir John Houghton, co-chair of the Scientific Assessment Working Group of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and Dr. Calvin DeWitt, professor of Environmental Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and director of the Au Sable Institute. Funding for the conference is provided by the U.K. Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The Au Sable Institute is an environmental education and stewardship institute which links together more than 50 Christian colleges and universities in the United States and Canada.

Religious and moral issue

"Climate change — popularly called 'global warming' — is a religious and moral issue as well as a scientific, economic, and political one," said Sir John Houghton. He is also chair of the board of the John Ray Initiative (JRI), an organization that aims to promote environmental stewardship and sustainable development, in accordance with Christian principles and the responsible use of science and technology. "There is no doubt in the minds of the majority of scientists who study this issue that human activities are seriously affecting the global climate. The longer we take to face up to this fact, the more difficult will it be to respond effectively with

appropriate adaptation and mitigation actions."

Leading scientists will provide an overview of the current state of knowledge about climate change and its impacts. Economists and industrialists will present policy options for slowing climate change, adapting to it and lessening its effects. Theologians and ethicists will present the moral and religious reasons for taking action. Leaders from government, business, religion, and international organizations will discuss how their institutions can address the challenge posed by human-caused climate change. Working groups will meet during the forum to discuss practical issues and action strategies, and will draft a concluding conference statement.

"The expected rate of rise of global average temperature is almost certainly greater than the earth has experienced for over 10,000 years and will provide difficulties of adaptation for many human communities and ecosystems," Houghton asserted.

Forum 2002 will address impacts of climate change on global poverty and environmental sustainability. Scientists expect global warming to have especially serious consequences for developing countries. Poorer nations will have a harder time coping with high temperatures, drought, disease, and stresses on agriculture, forests, and natural ecosystems.

Some countries could be completely submerged

Increasing temperatures are expected to cause sea levels to rise, affecting many millions of people. Some Pacific Island nations and some low-lying coastal areas, such as Bangladesh and southern China, could become completely submerged.

"As the world's largest producer of 'greenhouse gases,' as well as the world's richest, most powerful, and most technologically advanced nation, the United States has a special responsibility to take leadership on this issue," said DeWitt.

"But we have dragged our feet and pulled back from diplomatic processes such as the Kyoto Protocol. We need to educate the American public and its governmental and religious leaders about the full seriousness of this problem, and about our moral and religious responsibility to speak up on behalf of the poor, of future generations, and God's good creation," DeWitt contended.

The Kyoto Protocol is an amendment to the Framework Convention on Climate Change

which would impose mandatory limits on greenhouse gas emissions by developed nations. The U.S. signed and ratified the Framework Convention following the Rio Summit, but President George W. Bush has stated that the U.S. will not ratify the Kyoto Protocol.

Critics of the protocol argue that it is flawed and will at best have only a small impact on climate change. However, Houghton said, "Neither the U.S. nor any other country has put forward any alternative proposal, and rejecting it would undo the work of 10 years

of negotiations. There can be little progress internationally without some kind of legally binding commitments, and the reductions proposed by the protocol will bring emissions from developed nations substantially below business-as-usual projections."

Memes and dreams: What Would Joseph Do?

Have you ever heard of a 'meme'? About twenty years ago Richard Dawkins, the author of *The Selfish Gene*, noticed that we are very good at passing around new ideas. A song, story, skill or clever idea quickly spreads to others. Scientists now call these units of easily remembered ideas memes. They are said to be analogous to biological genes, and they are thought to be transmitted by imitation (and memory) and modified under a set of identifiable rules. People make memes and so do many animals. Some birds for instance, are great imitators of other bird songs.

Singing whales and dreaming saints

My favorite example of a natural meme is whale song. When we began carefully listening to these creatures we found something remarkable. They had a complex repertory of musical conversation. These melodies are endlessly sung, and continually modified. One male or even a whole pod will pick up snatches of song from other whales across hundreds of miles of ocean and incorporate it into a new song.

But memes can also help us vision a new future. One of the more famous human memes begins like this "I have a dream." Almost everyone who hears it spoken instantly recognizes the distinctive cadence of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr's famous speech.

A meme for our times

Many young people today wear Christian emblems of various kinds. Some of these are expressions of their faith, and others merely attractive cultural ornaments. Crosses have been popular for almost two decades, and so has a clever set of letters — WWJD? For those in the know, the acronym is an aid to moral living. It seems to work something like the old fashioned rosary beads, focusing our attention on spiritual matters. But these letters are also an evangelistic tool. We hope that someone will ask, "What do those letters stand for, then we can initiate a conversation about "What would Jesus do?"

The idea of WWJD is truly a meme, passing quickly by imitation, and it has generated numerous variations. Some are cheeky: We Want Jelly Donuts or World-wide Juvenile Delinquent, and others serious alternatives like WWJD about gay rights? or the death penalty? To this growing list I will suggest "What would Joseph do?" I think that in this world of global environmental challenges his life can be a powerful example to us.

WWJD — the bureaucrat

Joseph and his family had a long tradition of tending sheep. So it might seem unusual that out of

Creation waits...

John Wood



these people of the land would come a class of professional bureaucrats. From Joseph onward, we find God gifting individuals for public service of the highest order. These are people who develop entirely new ways of looking at the structural relationships in our societies. The persons like Joseph that I am thinking of include Moses, Nehemiah, and Daniel.

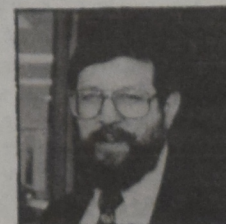
Joseph was the dreamer, the impetuous youth, the impertinent brother. He celebrated his gift from God (of dreams) and his father (a marvelous coat) by alienating his brothers so much that they wanted, quite literally, to kill him. In the end, they sold him off, and there our story begins. Joseph goes into the school of hard knocks and emerges as the leading bureaucrat of all Egypt. The transformation from shepherd into public servant is a remarkable story! The distance between these professions in our day as in his could not be greater. Those who control the political, economic and legal structures of society are easily cut off from the day to day, the nitty-gritty (another meme) of life.

Patron saint for environmental practitioners

Joseph's life is instructive. The story begins intimately, with family. It then moves outward to encompass the entire world. The rise of Joseph into a new class of public service foreshadows the emerging nation-state of Israel. Then the story returns again to the intimacy of the family. In the process, lives are transformed.

Throughout it all, God is working for good, with those who love him, and are called according to his purposes. But here are also the tools of unregenerate humanity. God is causing, as it says elsewhere, "even the wrath of humans to praise Him." Notice how Joseph acts at the pivotal times in his life. His motivation is "for I fear God" and he knows that "I cannot... but God will".

When he finally reveals himself to his brothers he calms them by saying "because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you." This is how a servant faces adversity. We still need persons gifted by God with insight to assist us in choosing the right path among difficult choices. Joseph was such a person in his generation. So today we might ask, WWJ(oseph)D?



John R. Wood teaches environmental science at The King's University College, Edmonton.

Book Review

Considering ecumenism

James R. Payton, Jr

Most of the conservative Christian traditions in North America – Baptist, Reformed, whatever – have long been suspicious of ecumenism.

We have adjudged the movement as a “sell-out” of precious truths in favor of a bland commonality in views – a commonality which, to make matters worse, the ecumenical movement hardly seems willing to require strictly from its members. We have not entirely repudiated association with other denominations, to be sure: for example, in the U.S.A., many conservative denominations (including the Christian Reformed Church [CRC]) have joined the National Association of Evangelicals. But those same denominations – including the CRC – have refused to apply for membership in the National Council of Churches or the World Council of Churches (WCC).

Consequently, it was not surprising that Marlin VanElderren, a faithful son of the CRC, had hard questions and expressed serious reservations when he was asked to

become editor of the ecumenical movement's chief magazine, *One World*. (VanElderren had served for several years as editor at William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.) Evidently, the answers he received adequately responded to his hesitations, and he moved with his family to Geneva, the centre of the WCC's operations, to take up his task. For more than 17 years, from 1983 to 2000, VanElderren served with distinction – at times, even brilliance – as editor of the magazine.

His influence lives on

His untimely death on Pentecost Monday 2000 brought an end to his efforts, but not to his influence: a selection of his editorials has appeared in a stimulating and thought-provoking book – Marlin VanElderren, *Finding a Voice: Communicating the Ecumenical Movement* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2000 [xi + 171 pp.]). It makes for fascinating, challenging reading – especially for us Reformed types who, like Marlin himself initially, are suspicious of the ecumenical

movement. He became a convert to the cause while remaining faithful to his own CRC background. His editorials reflect his wide familiarity with the ecumenical movement and pull no punches about its strengths or its weaknesses. From within that familiarity, these sparkling, well-written editorials also show that ecumenism cannot be an option for churches: it is, simply, an imperative of the Gospel, a manifestation of obedience to it.

Van Elderren doesn't repeatedly hammer that point in these editorials; indeed, he points it out gently in dealing honestly with the challenges the ecumenical movement faces. He forthrightly wrestles with what it can mean that ecumenism, warts and all, is necessary for us. But he refuses to water down or explain away what Christ himself prayed for on the night before he was betrayed: “I ask not only on behalf of these [the disciples], but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, *that they may all be one*. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be one in us, *so that the world may believe that you have sent me*” (John 17:20-21).

Oneness serves as witness to world

Christ prayed for oneness among his people; more than that, he indicated that oneness would serve as a witness to the world of what God had done in Christ. It doesn't require special training in Scriptural exegesis to see what Christ is saying; that is about as plain as it can be. But what Christ joined together many Christians have put asunder; we in the conservative Christian churches have become especially adept at evasive maneuvers in this regard.

But no matter how long we cook it, evasion is not obedience. Christ prayed that his followers would be one; he tied that to the world believing the Gospel. If we care about the Gospel, and if we care about the world God so loved that he gave his only son, then seeking oneness is not an option: it is an imperative. We can pile up excuses as high as the Tower of Babel, but compared to the importance of the Gospel, they amount to a hill of disobediences. Marlin Van Elderren came to appreciate that; in his own gentle but probing way, he communicated it in many

Finding a Voice

Communicating the Ecumenical Movement



Marlin VanElderren

approach seems more ideologically determined and politically sensitized, more touchy about “our [political] side” than concerned for the well-being of our Christian siblings.

Concerns about doctrine

But what about our doctrinal concerns? The ecumenical movement has dealt with doctrine from the start, but the churches in that movement come from many different cultures, with different insights. As VanElderren points out, in the WCC “there are many voices. Sometimes they won't blend well” (p. 2). This doesn't preclude speaking to each other to encourage greater fidelity to the Christian faith; but should we

of these editorials. He gives us much to ponder.

Van Elderren doesn't dodge the difficulties the ecumenical movement faces. He openly acknowledges, “Yet lying between the humbling acknowledgment that disunity in the church is unfaithful to our confession and disobedient to God and the realization of the oneness we confess, there are numerous steps, most of them difficult to take, some of them painful” (p. 9). His editorials point out many of these steps; do we stalwart Reformed types have the courage to take them? Ecumenism is not for the spiritually timid: it inevitably makes us move beyond our comfort zone – challenging us, at times humbling us, often leaving us uncertain.

Sometimes in the past, especially during the Cold War, we non-participants in the ecumenical movement pointed to the criticisms it brought of the West while remaining strangely silent about the Communist East as evidence enough that the ecumenical movement should not be trusted. Without being defensive, VanElderren indicates the pastoral thrust of that differentiated response by pointing out that it was “the WCC policy of avoiding public declarations about countries where church leaders fear this would damage the interests of their churches” (p. 154). This policy comes off sounding insightfully pastoral and culturally sensitive, alert to the dangers posed to brothers and sisters in Christ; by contrast, the critics'

conservative Christians in the West so blithely assume the conversation can only go one way? Let's face it: some of us Reformed Christians come off as if our doctrinal stance is the only genuine, legitimate development of the Christian faith – as if it was the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed... only bigger.

But can any of us really believe – genuinely believe, down deep in our beings – that everybody else really has to see things precisely as we do? Is it not the stance of humility to acknowledge that there could be a distinction between our understanding and the truth itself? Ecumenism forces us, at least, to acknowledge that distinction; once it does, it opens us up to listening to and even learning from others – without dropping our concern for doctrinal fidelity. Ecumenism forces us to fasten onto what all Christians share, and with that to consider the relative significance of what keeps us apart.

A platform for Christians

As VanElderren points out, ecumenism gives a platform for Christians from other cultures in other parts of the world to speak out on the implications of the Christian faith. Often enough, their words ring with such stinging authenticity that we can only ask ourselves how much our understanding and practice of the faith has been accommodated to our culture. Ecumenism thus invites us to hear the Gospel again – more

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CHRISTIAN COURIER FILES

Ecumenism: Above is the logo for the Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches.

Church

Court hearing could have far-reaching consequences for India's Christians

Anto Akkara

NEW DELHI (ENI) — India's Supreme Court is holding a marathon hearing into the rights of Christians and other minority groups to administer schools and other educational institutions.

Christians believe that the court's ruling could have wide ramifications for their rights in a country where they make up no more than three per cent of the population.

The hearing began on April 2 before a special 11-member bench of the Supreme Court — the biggest bench in 30 years.

Dozens of Christian agencies being heard

Dozens of church bodies and prominent Christian institutions are among the petitioners in the 200 cases that are being heard together by the court.

"Whatever be the final judgement from this [hearing], it will have far-reaching consequences for Christians and other minorities," said Mani Jacob, general secretary of the All India Association for Christian Higher Education. The association represents 230 Christian colleges linked to the Roman Catholic Church and the National Council of Churches in India.

India's constitution guarantees religious and linguistic minorities



B. P. WOLFF, FPG

Schools in India, such as this one near Varanasi, often hold classes outdoors.

the right "to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice."

Rights infringed upon

However, Christian bodies argue that a number of court judgments in recent years have infringed upon their constitutional rights, so they have petitioned the Supreme Court as a result.

In one case in 1992 involving a church-run college in New Delhi, the Supreme Court ruled that minority-run educational institutions

that received financial aid could admit no more than 50 per cent of their student body from the minority community. The other 50 per cent had to be composed of students from other communities, selected on the basis of merit.

The following year, the Supreme Court ruled that 50 per cent of admissions to private professional training colleges such as schools of medicine and engineering had to be set aside for students chosen by the government, and that for these students, the college

could charge only the fees set by the government.

Following these two judgments, several state governments passed more restrictive legislation limiting the freedom of school and college management to select students and to appoint staff.

An absolute right

Jacob told ENI that the constitution, however, gave minorities an "absolute" right to make decisions about their educational institutions.

He said he hoped the Supreme Court would end the 50 per cent admissions limit, but that government lawyers were arguing for

increased controls on admissions and appointments.

Jacob said: "If there is misuse of the freedom [afforded by the constitution], our stand is that the government should act against the guilty [party] instead of curbing minority rights blindly and thereby punishing the entire community."

Father P. P. George, executive secretary of the education commission of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, said that all minorities were "hopeful that the court will uphold our rights to the maximum."

Hong Kong Bible smuggler controversy

CHINA (Compass) — China watcher Dr. Chan Kim-Kwong accused the media of incorrectly reporting the case of Hong Kong Bible smuggler Li Guangqiang. He questioned whether Li's was a genuine case of religious persecution or a case of "illegal commercial activity."

Another China watcher replied, "It is interesting to raise this issue of what constitutes persecution. In Li's case, the version of the Bible was banned and could not be delivered if declared — which is the reason Christians have to resort to

smuggling Bibles in the first place!" Li Guangqiang was a Hong Kong businessman who arranged for 33,000 copies of Witness Li's "Recovery" Bible to be delivered to a house church group inside China.

Li was arrested in 2001, given a two-year prison sentence, then released back to Hong Kong on February 19 this year. His case became a major diplomatic issue, with both the Hong Kong and U.S. governments making representations to the Chinese government on his behalf.

State government closes 24 Christian schools in Nigeria

Schools must adhere to Islamic law

Obed Minchakpu

KANO, Nigeria (Compass) — Nigeria's Kano state government closed 24 Christian schools in the state following the schools' refusal to implement a government decision that all Christian schools must provide Islamic religious studies as part of their curricula.

The schools were forcibly closed by an education task force set up by the state government to enforce the implementation of Islamic studies in line with Islamic law, or "sharia."

Dr. Mohammed Tahir, Chairman of the Education Task Force, told Compass in Kano on March 19 that the law enforced the Islamic education policy and supported the closure of the schools.

He said more Christian schools would be closed unless they adhere

to the Islamic education policy, pay the required education taxes and employ Islamic clerics to teach Islam.

Schools asked to hire Muslim teachers

Tahir added that the schools closed down so far have not complied with the government requirement of paying \$16,000 in tax, employing Muslim teachers and enforcing the Islamic dress code in their schools.

"Because of these reasons, we were left with no option than to use the powers conferred on us to close down the schools," he said. Some of the schools closed included Prime College, Samandi International School, Tropical College, Prince International School, Rhema International College, and Translate College.

Rev. Dr. Joseph Fadipe, chairman of the Kano chapter of the

Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), said the closures resulted from Christians resisting the government's discriminatory religious policies that favor Muslims over Christians.

"It is a plan to spread Islamic law — sharia — to Christian schools. They intend to foist Islam on our children by all possible means. We refuse this manipulation of religion. We cannot accept the indoctrination of our children with a religion we do not ascribe to," he said. "We are determined to fight this injustice. We are considering legal action to seek for a redress over this matter."

Students and parents of the affected schools are already finding it difficult to cope with the situation, as the children no longer attend schools and parents fear for their future.

Nigerian state bans house churches

Obed Minchakpu

LAGOS, Nigeria (Compass) — Nigeria's Lagos state has outlawed the use of residential buildings as house churches, and new church building projects must secure governmental approval.

The Lagos state government communicated the new regulations to churches on March 27. Failure to adhere to these measures, the government said, would lead to prosecution.

Kola Animashaun, permanent secretary for the Office of Physical Planning, Ministry of Environment, told Compass that the measures were adopted to create a "peaceful environment." He said all churches located in residential areas would no longer be permitted to hold all-night programs such as prayer vigils unless their worship halls installed soundproofing materials.

"There is no doubt that we are going to demolish illegal church buildings being used as house churches, as we never gave approval for their construction," Animashaun said.

However, Rev. Mike Okonkwo, president of Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN), told Compass that the government decision is a "ploy by the Muslim government in the state to persecute Christians and deny them their right to worship God."

Church

Returning Christians face threats, violence in Indonesia

Muslim leader refuses to guarantee safety of refugees

Geoff Stamp

MANADO, Indonesia (Compass) — Muslim groups are trying to prevent Christians from rebuilding their homes, says Mona Saroinsong, co-ordinator of the Crisis Centre of the General Synod of Protestant Churches in North and Central Sulawesi.

Following last November's

violence in Central Sulawesi, the presence of additional armed forces has resulted in "a significant cooling down." The government, keen to implement last December's Malino agreement which seeks to re-establish the peaceful cohabitation of Christians and Muslims, is pressuring people to return to their villages.

Nevertheless, Christian families are experiencing threats and stone-throwing when they start to rebuild their houses or tend their crops.

Speaking with their guns

On Sunday, March 17, more than 500 Laskar Jihad, a Muslim extremist group, went to Tagolu, a village five miles south of Poso, and threatened the Christians using a public address system.

"If you do not listen, we will

have to speak with our guns. If Muslims try to hinder us, we will throw them into the river. We will take back all of this land from the Christian dogs," the Muslim leader said. The Laskar Jihad extremists threw stones at Christian houses and spray-painted insults on the walls. They promised to return the following week, but were prevented from doing so by the presence of armed forces.

Christians from Toini and Malei villages, from Poso city and Poso Pesisir, confirmed the stone throwing and threats. They told Saroinsong they were living in constant fear of anti-Christian violence. Muslim fishermen who had resumed trading in Christian communities, however, said that nobody had threatened them and they felt at ease.

A bomb exploded at the Department of Social Affairs in Poso on March 26, destroying most of the main building. Crisis Centre workers believe this was a deliberate act to destroy any evidence of misuse of public funds. A rehabilitation grant of \$4.50 per person per month had not been made available to the refugees since the government program began last December.

A Crisis Centre spokesman said that few people had ever received any of the allocated funds, but when questioned about this, local officials had claimed the funds were needed for other projects. Representatives from the refugee groups, the aid organizations and the Crisis Centre recently asked for proof of these projects. This now appeared impossible as all documents were destroyed in the blast.

In Palu and Poso, 155 Christian prisoners were released during February and March following the advocacy efforts made by the Crisis Centre supported by national and international advocacy organizations.

Christians still in prison

Fifteen Christians remain in Poso prison, including five men facing murder charges. The men were arrested following violence in Peleru during July 2001 when several villagers were killed. Muslims arrested for the same offense were released within three months. The men — Imanuel Mokere (35), Pagi (25), Mudar (32), Sabar Prenta (27), and Boy Puai (25) — have been in prison for eight months without trial, and their morale is low: one of them recently attempted suicide.

Twelve Christians are left in Palu prison. Among them are the three men sentenced to death for

their alleged part in the June 2000 violence in Poso: Fabien Tibo, Marinus Riwa and Dominggus da Silva, who await presidential clemency or a re-trial.

'No justice for Christians'

The Crisis Centre advocacy team constantly raises matters of inequality and injustice to no avail. Crisis Centre spokesman Jan Patris Binela said there was "no justice for Christians." Christians received 18-month prison sentences for weapons-related charges while Muslims were given three months. In one instance, 29 Laskar Jihad Muslims who had been caught in the destruction and looting of Christian property last year were allowed to finish their month of fasting before arrest. "To date, these men have still not been arrested," said Binela.

"We need international human rights lobbying to bring these cases to the attention of Western governments," he added.

In Manado (North Sulawesi), six non-governmental aid organizations (NGOs) are pleading for Christian refugees threatened with forced repatriation to Halmahera in North Maluku. Government funding for almost 10,000 refugees in North Sulawesi has been stopped and refugee camps could all be closed by the end of April.

Facing desperate conditions

Those people who have returned to Halmahera face desperate conditions: no medical facilities, shortages of food, fuel and power supplies; children have no schools, books or clothes, and infants are malnourished. Tuberculosis and malaria are rife in the makeshift camps.

"We are beginning to see disease and malnutrition among the refugees in camps here," said Saroinsong. "We need to distribute medicines and good food now but lack the means. International NGOs seem to have no more funds. We are appealing for help from the international community. "The authorities push the refugees to return to their burnt-out villages but have prepared nothing for them. Aside from starvation and disease, these people face the constant threat of Muslim aggression."

Laskar Jihad leader Jafar Umar Thalib recently stated that there was no guarantee for the safety of refugees returning to North Maluku. Unrest could break out at any time.

An Egyptian detail

"He [Pharaoh] had him [Joseph] ride in a chariot as his second-in-command, and men shouted before him, 'Make way!' [in the original: 'abrek]. Thus he put him in charge of the whole land of Egypt." (Gen 41:43, NIV)

The historicity of the biblical narratives is a hotly debated issue in biblical studies. Did the events recorded in them (for example Abraham's migration from Ur to Canaan, or Daniel's deciphering of the handwriting on the wall, or the wise men's coming to honor the baby Jesus) really happen, or didn't they? In fact, did Abraham, or Daniel, or the wise men, ever even exist at all? There are many biblical scholars today, as well as many laypeople, who would answer "no" to all of these questions. On the other hand, there also many Bible students, both specialists and non-specialists, who insist that the historicity of the events recorded in Scripture happened exactly as described — that in fact the reliability of the Bible (and ultimately the truth of the Christian faith) stands or falls with that being the case.

Biblical variations

For my own part, I believe that the historicity of the biblical narratives is indeed crucial to the Bible's overall message, although we need to be careful not to impose our own notions of proper historical reporting on the Bible. Clearly, the gospel writers felt free, for example, to give different accounts of Jesus' healing of the blind man (or men) just before (or after) he visited Jericho on his way to Jerusalem (compare Luke 18:35-43 with Matthew 20:29-34). Similarly, the writer of Chronicles feels free to exclude from his account of David and Solomon almost all the negative coverage of them found in Samuel and Kings. When we affirm the actual occurrence of events recorded in Scripture, we need to bear in mind that this kind of variation in reporting is also part of biblical history-writing.

The text I have quoted contains an interesting detail which bears on the question of the historicity of the Joseph story. Although many biblical scholars consider that story legendary, there is also fairly wide agreement that the word translated "Make way!" in the NIV is probably an Egyptian expression which has been incorporated into the Hebrew text. This was not noticed until the nineteenth century, when the ancient Egyptian language was rediscovered and deciphered, after being lost to knowledge for many hundreds of years. It turns out that the Egyptian expression in question, 'abrek, was used, at least

Chapter & Verse

Al Wolters



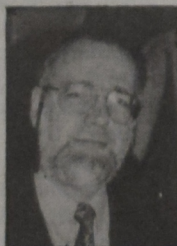
in its plural form, on occasions of royal solemnity, and thus fits the Genesis context quite nicely. It thus serves as an intriguing bit of evidence supporting the historicity of the Joseph story.

Singular or plural?

Some scholars object, however, that 'abrek in ancient Egyptian is a singular form, something analogous to "prostrate yourself" in English, as compared to "prostrate yourselves," the form that one would expect (so it is argued) of a solemn cry addressed to the general population as a royal figure approached. In my opinion, however, this is not a very strong argument. It is not at all unusual for a person to use the singular form when addressing a large number of people. In such cases it is simply a question of each member of the crowd being individually addressed. It is easy, for example, to imagine Billy Graham saying to a huge crowd of people, "Surrender yourself (singular) to God," and meaning everyone in the crowd that he is addressing.

As a matter of fact, this is quite a common usage in the Bible. The Ten Commandments are couched in the singular (although modern English, which no longer distinguishes between a singular *thou* and a plural *you* no longer makes this clear), and yet they were addressed to the entire people of Israel. Similarly, the book of Deuteronomy, which consists of speeches addressed by Moses to the Israelites, moves back and forth between singular and plural forms. There is nothing particularly unusual about this. In my opinion, therefore, the fact that 'abrek is a singular form is no impediment to accepting it as a genuine Egyptian loan word in our text.

Of course, this linguistic detail does not prove that the story of Joseph is historically reliable. But it does provide interesting and welcome evidence to those who, for other reasons, already accept that the Bible is here describing real events that actually happened.



Al Wolters teaches Bible and Greek at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario. He is about to start a year-long quasi-sabbatical, in which he hopes to complete his commentary on Zechariah.

Psalms

The Genevan Psalms: towards the recovery of a rich tradition

David T. Koyzis

I do not know whether it is proper to have a favorite book of the Bible, but if it is, then mine would have to be the Psalms. This is for two reasons. First, my lifelong love of music cannot but make me partial to a book whose every chapter was meant to be sung. Second, the Psalms have sustained me through troubled times over the decades.

I grew up in an Orthodox Presbyterian Church congregation, where we were accustomed to singing the psalms, although I rarely knew we were doing so, since the OPC's *Trinity Hymnal* scattered the psalms among the other hymns. Those psalms we did sing came largely from the 1912 *Psalter*, the basis of the CRC's *Psalter Hymnal*.

In my youth our family began worshipping in a non-Reformed church which sang from a non-denominational hymnal heavily oriented towards the revival songs of Ira Sankey, Charles Gabriel and Fanny Crosby. Needless to say, there were almost no psalms in this collection, except possibly the Scottish Psalter's ubiquitous 23rd Psalm, which has managed to find its way into most hymnals. In short, in moving from one denomination to another, we had lost the singing of psalms, yet I did not feel this loss, because I was never aware of our having sung them to begin with!

Fascinated with Psalter

In the mid-1980s I discovered the Genevan Psalter and began what has become nearly an obsession with these wonderful tunes and this centuries-old way of singing the Bible's chief liturgical book. My initial introduction to them was in the Canadian Reformed Churches' *Book of Praise*. Soon thereafter I discovered, to my surprise, that I had already had a copy of the Genevan Psalter in my personal library for some time. During a visit to Prague (in what was then Czechoslovakia) in 1976 I had purchased a Czech Protestant psalter and hymnal published in 1900. It took me nearly a decade to figure out that this volume contained, in addition to numerous hymns in the

continental European tradition, all 150 Psalms set to their proper Genevan melodies – versified in the Czech language!

A few years later I moved to Hamilton, Ontario, and acquired a copy of the Dutch *Liedboek voor de Kerken*, an ecumenical collection containing, once more, all of the Genevan tunes, but with a more recent versification of the texts in Dutch. Unable to play the piano, I generally worked these tunes out on the guitar, where they took on something of the flavor of John Dowland's compositions for the lute.

Not having grown up with the 19th-century arrangements more familiar to older Reformed Christians in this country, in my head I heard these tunes in their Renaissance context, where their similarity to the works of Thomas Tallis, William Byrd and Orlando Gibbons seemed evident. I felt as if I had discovered a huge and largely untapped source of untold richness. Around this time I began to versify the Psalms in a contemporary idiom so they could be sung to these marvelous melodies.

Coming fresh to the Genevan tradition means that I am working without the benefit and the burden alike of having grown up hearing them sung a certain way. At a time

when so much traditional hymnody is being neglected in favor of praise music, with its repetitive phrases and often transparently derivative tunes, we need to affirm that the singing of the Psalms need hardly be a dreary business.

A lamentable inability to lament

The liveliest of the Psalms, e.g., 47 and 92, would even seem to call for a supportive percussion instrument, such as the tamborine. At the same time, we should never shrink from singing the laments, which sorely need to be reincorporated into our liturgical life. Our own churches, influenced as they are by an individualistic, consumer-driven culture, often seem to suffer from a lamentable inability to lament. Our congregations need to learn once again to sing Psalms 88 and 137, among many others.

This brings me to my second reason for loving the Psalms. Everyone goes through tough times, and I am no different in this respect. During such periods I have found it deeply comforting to immerse myself in the Psalms, drinking in their praises, complaints, expressions of sorrow, and individual and corporate confessions of sin.

Even the darkest of the psalms, Psalm 88, regularly takes my breath away when I read it. Who, after all, has not felt abandoned at some point in life? Who has not despaired of both present and future? And, even though we are loath to admit it, who of us has not wished to call down God's wrath on someone who has crossed us in some way? For me the darkest time was surely the premature birth of my daughter Theresa and her lengthy hospital stay in late 1998 and early 1999.

I have sometimes joked that, had Prozac been around two and a half millennia ago, a third of the Psalms and the whole of Ecclesiastes and Job might never have been written! Yet the expressions found in these books are part of the fabric of life – a life lived in a less-than-perfect, and sometimes horrific, world. But a life lived, all the same, in God's presence. God's love sometimes touches us by means of the very suffer-



An early Christian icon taken from the author's website. Koyzis writes: "Unable to play the piano, I generally worked these tunes out on the guitar, where they took on something of the flavor of John Dowland's compositions for the lute."

ing that seems so vexing while we are going through it. Afterwards, however, that suffering has become such a part of us that we cannot imagine exchanging it for something else. Our trials become for us what Sheldon Vanauken famously called God's "severe mercy," a mercy without which we would surely be lesser persons.

Embarrassed by Psalms

At least since the Enlightenment many Christians¹ have claimed to find the Psalms something of an embarrassment. Even so firm an apologist for the Christian faith as C. S. Lewis refers to some expressions therein as uncharitable and even "devilish."

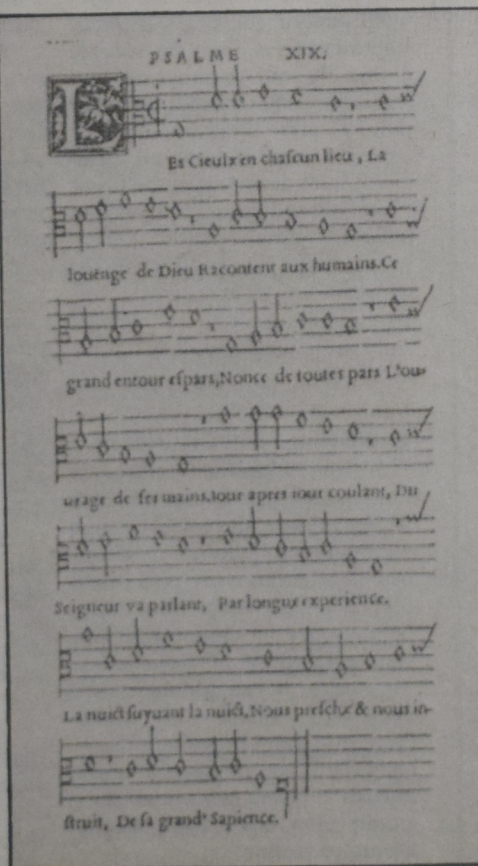
In Dostoyevsky's celebrated novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*, there is a scene in which the protagonist Alyosha's recently deceased mentor, Father Zosima, is being memorialized prior to burial. Because Father Zosima was a "priest and monk of the strictest rule, the Gospel, not the Psalter, had to be read over his body by monks in holy orders." When I first read this part of the book, I couldn't help pitying Father Zosima, because he was departing this life without the benefit of the Psalms. But, of course, the author's point was that, for the mere monk not subject to such a strict

discipline, the Psalms would have to suffice. I could not bring myself to accept this implied inferiority of the Psalter. Indeed, I and many others have found in the Psalms the very lifeblood of the believer.

Koyzis' sabbatical Psalms project

During part of my sabbatical last year, in addition to completing my book on political ideologies, I finished versifications of 50 Genevan Psalms and composed arrangements for the tunes. This has been a real labor of love, and I hope eventually to do this for all 150 Psalms. To be sure, there are many legitimate ways to sing the Psalms, ranging from Gregorian chant and Gelineau psalmody to various metrical forms. But the Genevan tradition deserves wider exposure than it has received, particularly in the English-speaking world. A recovery of the Genevan Psalms could be serviceable to a much needed renewal of Psalm-singing in the several Christian traditions.

David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer University College and is an amateur poet and composer. His psalm arrangements are posted on the internet and can be found at www.redeemer.on.ca/academics/polisci/psalter.html. See next page for two of Koyzis's rewordings of Psalms.



A French-language musical rendition of Psalm 19, taken from Koyzis' website.

Psalms/Psychology

Two Psalms according to Koyzis



David T. Koyzis

Psalm 130

(76 76 D)

*Out of the depths I call you,
Lord, listen when I cry!
Hear me in your compassion
and heed my restless sigh.
If you should mark transgressions,
Lord, who of us could live?
But we will gladly praise you,
for you in grace forgive.*

*I wait upon the Lord God
and trust his promised word.
More than I long for daybreak,
my soul now seeks the Lord.
O Israel, trust the Lord God
and his unfailing grace,
for he is full of mercy
and saves our sinful race.*

Psalm 6

(776 D)

*O Lord, do not chastise me,
nor in your wrath despise me.
Be merciful, O Lord.
My strength is slowly failing,
my bones within are wailing:
how long, how long, O Lord?*

*Turn to me, Lord, and save me;
Rescue me in your mercy,
and show your loving ways.
In death who will remember?
for in its endless slumber
no one can sing your praise.*

*Weary am I with groaning;
through many nights of moaning
I drench my bed with tears.
My eyes are sore from grieving,
since foes who are deceiving
have preyed upon my fears.*

*Out of my sight, transgressors!
fly from me, cruel oppressors!
The Lord has heard my cries.
He's answered my petitions;
my enemies' ambitions
have met their sure demise.*

When spouses cannot be there for each other

Ruth-Ann had nothing left to give. For five years she kept the marriage going hoping he would find his way back to her. For five years she had tried to meet his needs. Now her well was dry. Yet, now Michael wanted her to try again.

She shook her head, and tears ran down her cheeks. "I can't do this anymore, no matter how much I try. I can't do this." He frantically looked towards me. "This can't be happening to us," he said. "I know I made some major mistakes in the last while, but I promise to make it up to her. If she can only hang in there for six months, she will see that I have changed." He turned his pleading face towards her. She looked away. "I have waited so long to hear you say that," she said, "but I can't do it anymore." Michael looked at her in stunned silence.

Marital mutuality?

Most of us begin our marriages expecting mutual give and take. This does not always happen. And so, a pattern begins to develop. One person will be the giver and the other will be the taker. Neither of them may realize what is happening at the beginning of their marriage. But when time goes on and their life becomes more complicated the giver runs out of steam. The taker becomes irritable and demanding, not understanding why things are no longer the way they were. And so, conflict arises. Over time, chronic negative communication patterns begin to develop with regular predictability. Soon, nerves are shattered and a breakdown brings the relationship to a crisis.

Healing takes time

When the atmosphere between spouses swirls

Getting Unstuck

Arlene Van Hove

with fiery tempers or simmers with stony silences, healing will take time. Sometimes a temporary separation is needed to calm the waters. Other times, working on oneself is needed before anything good can happen in the relationship. And still other times, love needs to be re-kindled, albeit in more healthy way. All of this takes time.

A healthy self as the key to change

In highly dependent and deeply troubled relationships, the spouses cannot be there for each other for awhile. Each of them needs to work on their own unfinished business before any healthy movement is possible in their relationship. This often surprises couples. They have been so used to looking to the other for support — often in unhealthy ways — they no longer know how to function on their own.

This solitary journey does not need to be as painful as it sometimes is. It can be a time of renewed commitment to God. It can be a time of quiet reflection about what is important in life. It can be a time of soothing silence that resurrects their spirits. But most of all it can be a time of healthy growth so that both spouses can be keys of change for a better and happier future.



Arlene Van Hove is a psychotherapist with Cascade Christian Counselling Association in Surrey, B.C.

News

Violence causes mission to move its base

VENEZUELA (Compass) — A Colombian rebel incursion into a Venezuelan border city from which New Tribes Mission (NTM) operates has prompted the mission to move the base to the safer northern part of the country. In addition, NTM will also move its boarding school from the southern Venezuelan jungle.

The mission decided to move the two facilities after a Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) incursion six months ago across the Orinoco River, which marks part of the Colombia-Venezuela border. Rebels and the Venezuelan military exchanged shots at the airport in Puerto Ayacucho, where the military has a hangar.

NTM co-ordinates its work with unreached people groups in Venezuela from its Puerto Ayacucho base, NTM spokesman Scott Ross said. "If the FARC is going to bang around the border, it's better to move North American expatriates who seem to be a target of the FARC."

Peruvian evangelicals seek equality

PERU (Compass) — A Lima-based evangelical legal rights group supports a proposal that could change laws regarding religion. If passed, the bill would grant all religions in Peru equal footing with the official state Catholic Church.

"It's not as much of a problem of religious liberty as it is an equality issue," said Alfonso Wieland,

director of the Lima-based Peace and Hope Association. "Evangelical churches are asking for the same rights as Catholics."

Wieland says that Congressman Natale Amprimo, a Catholic, presented the bill to Congress last October. Under current Peruvian law, evangelical churches have only non-governmental organization or non-profit group status. A con-

gressional commission has studied the bill and will present its opinion to Congress, a process that may bring it to a vote at any time in coming months.

Women

Celebrate the resourceful woman (Proverbs 31)

Calvin Seerveld

Resourceful woman of Proverbs 31

10 Any possibility of finding a resourceful woman?

You could never equal her worth in jewels or red coral

11 Because her husband deep down always feels secure with her — he knows he will never lack plenty:

12 Completing what is good for him and frustrating evil that threatens marks a resourceful woman life long.

13 Dunning wool and flax for linen, hands crinkled rough with joy in the work:

14 A very resourceful woman brings home food for the family, from (near or) far away, like a gallant clipper ship in full sail.

15 From before dawn she is up to prepare a meal for the household, and outline chores for the young who help.

16 Garden land may catch her watchful eye, and at the right time she takes it; a resourceful woman gets a vineyard planted,

as fruit of her toiling hands.

17 Her hips and thighs are muscled with strength; her forearms flash a solid power—

18 Indeed, she experiences bodily how good her job is! — her lamp does not ever burn out at night.

19 Lightly her fingers guide the spinning wheel distaff and her hands hold tight the spindle.

20 More so, her open hand strains to protect the defenceless and her fingers extricate those hopelessly tangled in poverty.

21 Never does a resourceful woman fear the cold of snow for her household, since one by one they have been clothed doubly warm.

22 Ornamental cushions and tapestries — she sews them herself! her special homemade clothes include fine white linen and wool dyed purple.

23 Public respect greets her husband in the gates of the city when he goes to sit down with the grey-haired elders who judge in the land.

24 Quick to knit underclothes and even sell them, a resourceful woman can barter belts (and goods) with any tradesman.

25 Ready strength and rough-hewn beauty cover her snug so that she stands facing the coming days full of hearty laughter.

26 She opens her mouth with wisdom: the law of covenanting love rolls off her tongue!

27 The resourceful woman oversees what goes on in her house so insightfully



PHOTOS AND ARTWORK COURTESY CALVIN SEERVELD

Egyptian woman (c. 1950s), photographer unknown, Any possibility of finding a resourceful woman?

that no one ever has to eat the curds of sluggish laziness.

28 "Uniquely blessed is she!" her children shout in chorus; and her husband says, "Give her a hallelujah!"

29 Very many young women show gifts of resourcefulness, but you are better than all of them put together!"

30 Well, it is true: graceful charm can prove disappointing and to be good-looking might just be a mirage, but a woman who lives her womanhood plumb before the LORD God — she is worth celebrating!

31 You all, then, celebrate such a resourceful woman! let her enjoy some of the fruit that comes from her hands herself; let people shout her a hallelujah and praise her deeds publicly in the gateway to the city.

[Translation of Proverbs 31:10-31 (c) 1974 C. Seerveld]

Women pivotal in history

The book of Proverbs closes with an ABC alphabet poem in seven stanzas about "the resourceful woman" (31:10-31). If King Lemuel of Massa was an Arab (31:1), then God used an Arabian queen mother to book this Hebrew poetry. That historical setting helps us understand this composite portrait of a God-fearing wise woman. This woman of Proverbs 31 is not presented as an ideal everyone should strive to be like, but celebrates the range and glory of

womanhood as God understands it.

Throughout the Bible, from Eve to the virgin Mary, women have been pivotal in history. Deborah, Rahab, Bathsheba and Esther shine out in the earlier patriarchal world of Israel. Martha, Mary Magdalene, Lydia and Priscilla are mentioned in the newer testament Bible to show the normality of women taking roles of leadership, in the event that men might think they are the sole masters of public life (cf. Luke 22:24-26). And now the poem of Proverbs 31 celebrates the many unsung women who serve the LORD.

The whole book of Proverbs is about becoming wise. Standing in awe of the LORD God is the beginning of wisdom, says the Bible (Proverbs 1:7, Psalm 111:10); and responding to the disciplined call of God's Holy Spirit brings about a life-giving maturity in wisdom to discern good from evil (Proverbs 8:32-36; cf. Hebrews 5:11-6:8). Proverbs 1-9 metaphorically portrays wisdom as a

vigorous, provident woman, in contrast to a fascinating, seductive woman who represents a ruinous stupidity (much as the book of Revelation contrasts the glorious pregnant woman of God with the whore of commercialized Babylon, (Revelation 12,17-18). So, to have Proverbs end with a panegyric poem celebrating a genuinely wise woman shows God's subtle humor in a world where men like to dominate the scene.

Joy in mundane labor

A good woman can give security to a man, especially a husband, says Proverbs 31 (vv.11-12,23). (It is noteworthy that Genesis 2:24 says the grown man will "cling" to the woman, and not the other way around, in their union.) A woman who tirelessly cares for her household, and does it with style, is indeed praiseworthy (vv.13-15). The poem exalts in the woman's providing food "like a gallant clipper ship in full sail," in spinning and sewing fine linen and purple-dyed wool for warm clothes (vv. 19,21-22,24). The point is not to be frugal, stinting, dutiful, but to have joy in your mundane labor, and elan in your deeds, whatever they be (vv. 16-18).

Verse 26 is the key to

the resourceful woman: she speaks *chokmah* (wisdom) and the torah of *chesed* (God's guidance of covenanting love)! That, in a nutshell, is the gospel of God's Word of Proverbs. When a person becomes wise, he or she becomes adept at managing things with tactful, proactive insight (v.27), so matters don't fall apart. And when you can articulate, embody, and bring into action God's law for faithful, provident care in daily life — from gardening, sewing, buying and selling, nurturing children, reaching out to those who are poor-off (v.20) — you become clothed with a glorious rough-hewn beauty, and are buoyed up by a sure, robust confidence that the LORD God shall indeed come through in the days ahead (v.25).

The source of a woman's or a man's resourcefulness is the blessing of God, chants the family in this poem (vv.28-29). And then the reflective commentator (as is to be expected in such biblical wisdom literature; cf. epilogue to The Song of Songs, 8:5-14, Job, 42:10-17, Ecclesiastes, 12:9-14) gnomically rephrases the crucial stanza of verses 25-27 to say that good-looks may be a mirage, but life lived plumb before the LORD God shall surely bear good fruit (vv. 30-31). So, celebrate women who quietly evince a sturdy godliness in their daily walk with God and neighbor.

Giving my imagination wings

My mother Letitia had the deep love to take the time to read me stories when I was a child, which gave my imagination wings. My mother-in-law Ruth had the grit under God's eye to keep her family spiritedly alive in the Hague when there was next to nothing to eat during the war winter of 1944-45. My wife Ines has the holy stamina to be unperturbed during difficult turns in the road of



Chardin, La Pourvoyeuse (c.1738), Musee du Louvre ...Like a gallant clipper ship in full sail.

life, which has given me a great steadiness to do my work, and kept the family on an even keel.

Our gifted daughters Anya and Gioia have borne troubles, but continue to find rays of joy in their busy, complicated lives

that testify to the fact that our Lord keeps God's comforting hand on the pulse of what they do. My daughter-in-law Jan has the intelligent reserve and dedication to serve ably at home, church and office that bespeaks a sanctified nobility. My friend Phyl holds a

rich fund of perceptive awareness of the wonders of God's world and its literate history that enriches my vision of being human....

None of the women in my life are perfect, any more than I am a model man. But these women of flesh and blood I know, and the many more I could name, whose resourcefulness I bewonder, deserve to be celebrated! says the Bible of Proverbs 31:31. Resourcefulness is not aggressive, insistent, militant, or flashy. The resourceful woman of Proverbs 31 is also not a virtuous Miss American superwoman, or a media-championed successful Business Woman of the year. She is steadfastly normal.

A resourceful woman or man imbued with the wisdom Proverbs 31 celebrates is fruitfully embedded in a circle of persons for whom she serves as home base, as a crosswalk of security in the disquieting streets of daily life. Such a woman could be a mother, a single woman teacher, secretary, shepherd, chaplain, artist, or an elderly great-aunt.

Faithfully industrious

The resourceful woman is faithfully industrious, kindly astute and gentle in dealing with people, patiently preparing for what may still come from the Lord's hand — evidencing the fruits of the Holy Spirit (cf. Galatians 5:22-25). The resourceful woman of Proverbs 31 breathes the peace of the Lord abroad, is imaginative, resilient, has a gift for hearty laughter, and knows the fortitude to dig in deeper to trust God when evil

does come her way, providing real cheer to the anxious nearby.

Any possibility of finding a resourceful woman today? Thank God, yes. ...You all, then, celebrate such a resourceful woman!

Calvin Seerveld is Senior Member Emeritus in Philosophical Aesthetics of the Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto.

Author's Note: A newly published, finely tuned scholarly book by Al Wolters, *The Song of the Valiant Woman, Studies in the interpretation of Proverbs 31:10-31* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2001) gives an instructive, thorough account of the many theological pitfalls of exegeting this periscope. Wolters' good book triggered my taking up again this old translation I did but never put to print.



Vermeer, The Lacemaker (c.1670), Musee du Louvre. Ornamental cushions and tapestries — she sews them herself.



Ines (2001), photo by Calvin Seerveld. A woman who lives her womanhood plumb before the LORD God — she is worth celebrating!

The Resourceful Woman Song, Proverbs 31:10-31

1 Find a re-source - ful wo - man and you find
2 Watch a re-source - ful wo - man and you see
3 Know a re-source - ful wo - man and you know

more than the jewels pos - sessed by hu - man - kind.
one who can buy and sell with in - dus - try.
one who speaks wis - dom and whose car - ing shows.

Her hus - band nev - er need feel in - se - cure;
She has the skill to keep her chil - dren warm;
All who en - joy the good work she dis - plays

she gives pro - tec - tion that is strong, ma - ture.
she makes fine clothes, and saves the poor from harm;
re - spect her qual - i - ty and give her praise.

Run - ning a house - hold, o - ver - see - ing land,
her hus - band mer - its pub - lic con - fi - dence;
While charm and beau - ty mere - ly cap - ti - vate,

she shows both lead - er - ship and sure com - mand.
she fac - es times to come with laugh - ing strength.
a wo - man of the LORD we cel - e - brate.

Text and tune: Calvin Seerveld, 1985 ©
Harmonisation: Emily R. Brink, 1995

10 10 10 10 10 10
ANYA RUTH

Text and tune: Calvin Seerveld, 1985 Harmonization: Emily R. Brink, 1995 Anya Ruth. See www.seerveld.com/tuppence.html

Schizophrenia

Singing with Elizabeth

Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

Elizabeth, who has schizophrenia, introduced me to an illness and world I knew nothing about. We met 13 years ago at my church's interdenominational women's Bible study. Later, she joined our church. My relationship with her grew and intensified when I served as her deacon.

God has allowed me to serve Elizabeth, but she has also ministered to me. Once I visited her after a friend was in a serious accident while driving impaired. I was particularly devastated because another impaired driver had killed my sister and brother-in-law.

When I knocked on Elizabeth's door, I wasn't sure she would let me in. Because of her paranoia and delusions she often thought there were three Sonyas and wasn't sure which one to trust. Elizabeth opened the door. I entered her

shabby apartment and passed the stove, burnt black with grease, and the kitchen table, cluttered with plates full of unrecognizable days-old food.

God strengthened me through Elizabeth

"Let's read the Bible," she said immediately. We had never done that before. She sat on the only chair, then read from Isaiah. When she finished, she slapped the Bible shut and announced, "We're going to sing. I only have one copy of the song." I stood behind her, looking over her shoulder, and we sang the first verse of "Seek Ye First The Kingdom Of God." Tears filled my eyes. In my distress, God strengthened me through his servant, Elizabeth — poor, scorned, powerless. Jesus — poor, scorned, seemingly powerless — used her to re-energize my faith and help me to focus

on the coming of God's kingdom despite tragic events.

My experiences with Elizabeth have introduced me to courageous, ordinary people who help others in my community cope with mental illness.

Family Mental Health Support Network of Niagara Inc. is "family members who educate other family members about mental illnesses," says Dan Silver, its founder and executive director.

Witnessing the devastation

A registered social worker specializing in schizophrenia and mood disorders, Dan witnessed the devastation of mental illness from the time he was learning to walk. His brother was ill for several years before being diagnosed with schizophrenia in 1976 and later died from its effects. "In most cases, the onset is insidious. It is so slow that by the time everyone is on the same page, there is shock and denial. Our family was no different," Dan told me.

Dan recalls verbal and physical confrontations, hiding under the bed as a child, tormenting his brother for his poor hygiene and appearance, and lashing out at him with his fists in anger when his brother would share his disordered thoughts.

Because he witnessed his brother's pain and saw its effects



JEREMY TAYLOR — MICHAEL SEMAK

Support of family and friends is crucial to enkindling hope in a mentally ill person's life.

on his parents, relatives, and neighbors, Dan has worked to improve the system through which ill people "can get and stay well, families can help rather than hinder, and the larger system can become an effective partner in recovery rather than acting paternalistic."

Support of family and friends is crucial to enkindling hope in a mentally ill person's life. As Sophia Attema has learned, mental illness is very individual and therefore can be difficult to treat.

Sophia's brother has bi-polar disorder and symptoms of schizophrenia, such as internal voices. "Medication that worked for him last year or 10 years ago is no longer effective," she told me.

"This adds to the continuous battle for someone with mental illness. It becomes difficult to get them stable and keep them stable for long periods of time. Add to that the chemical changes in their bodies, the external stresses of life, and the stigma that goes with being mentally ill, and it is no wonder that many give up on life."

Faith gives her strength

Sophia receives motivation from 2 Thessalonians 3:13, "Never tire of doing what is right." Her faith gives her the strength and energy to press on in what sometimes seems to be an endless fight. "Over the years I have become able to separate the illness from my brother as a person," she said. "I remind myself and him that one day he will have a perfect mind and body because of Jesus Christ."

But in this world it takes more than faith to put a roof over the heads of mentally ill persons. My friend Elizabeth's story is all too typical. In August 2000, she faced eviction from her apartment. I helped her move into a better place. Within two months she was evicted again, spent several weeks in hotels, and eventually slept at Out of the Cold. Both of us were distressed by her homelessness.

Happily, her story doesn't end there. She now has an apartment, thanks to Gateway Residence of Niagara Inc. Gateway's short- and long-term housing program offers stability to adults with serious mental illness.

In August 2001, a partnership of five Niagara Region mental health agencies, including Gateway, received \$993,000 in annualized funding from the Ontario government to provide 86 apartments for people with serious mental illness who are homeless, at great risk of becoming homeless, live in substandard housing, or move so frequently that their mental health is negatively affected. Dan Silver, Gateway's Executive Director, expects to have all 86 apartments filled by April 2002.

Once after a traumatic, exhausting evening with Elizabeth, I drove her to the church hosting Out of the Cold. As we drove in tense silence, she suddenly started singing a Yiddish song, so wistful and full of longing that my eyes filled with tears. When she finished, I asked her to translate the words. "It has to do with shalom," she said. I recalled that shalom means peace. Since then I have often thought of Elizabeth's poignant song. My desire is for her to find peace in her troubled life.

How to be a Christian friend to someone with schizophrenia

Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

Bill MacPhee, publisher of Schizophrenia Digest and winner of the Canadian Mental Health Association's 2001 Media Award, shares the following advice from personal experience. He was diagnosed with schizophrenia 15 years ago at the age of 24.

1. Take steps to gain her trust. Persons suffering from schizophrenia experience depression. Often their friends fall away.
2. Be a good listener. Don't contradict delusional thoughts. At the same time, if possible, plant a seed of doubt about the delusion. For example, a young man suffering from schizophrenia thought he'd killed someone. His father took him to the police station and asked the officer to show his son that there was no police record for the deed he thought he'd done.
3. Be prepared to spend time with the mentally ill person over an extended period, respecting the long-term nature of the illness and avoiding the temptation to fix problems overnight.

Boost your friend's confidence

4. Boost your friend's confidence, since loss of self-esteem is one of the results of mental illness. Assess her giftedness and encourage her to pursue it, instead of focusing on her weaknesses.
5. Encourage her to care for her personal hygiene by making it as easy as possible to maintain. For instance, recommend a shower because a shower takes less effort than a bath, or suggest a shorter hairstyle because it's easier to manage.
6. Be prepared to have your schedule interrupted. For example, many people suffering from schizophrenia have sleeping disorders and might need to talk to someone in the middle of the night.
7. Include mentally ill persons in your circle of friends, since they suffer social isolation. Invite them to your Bible study, your children's sports events, church socials, and home for supper. Encourage them to meet others and establish a social network.
8. Don't say "You're not trying." Persons suffering from schizophrenia have a difficult time getting motivated.
9. Don't constantly bring up the past with the individual. Though the past is significant, it's important to deal with the present and the future.
10. Don't always ask, "Are you better today?" The illness is long-term and change comes slowly.
11. Don't expect your affection or attention to be reciprocated. One of schizophrenia's symptoms is emotional blandness and lack of joy.

Schizophrenia resources

1. *Schizophrenia Digest*, Magpie Publishing Inc. 176 Catherine St. Fort Erie, ON L2A 2J5. Toll free: 1-888-834-5537; Fax: 905-994-0304; E-mail at publisher@schizophreniadigest.com.
2. Contact Bill MacPhee at Schizophrenia Digest (above) to speak to your group or church about his illness and journey to recovery. He has also produced two videos, *Living With Schizophrenia* and *What Should be the Christian Perspective?* View a summary of the videos and order online at www.schizophreniadigest.com.
3. *Surviving Schizophrenia: A Manual for Families, Consumers and Providers* by E. Fuller Torrey, M.D. (HarperPerennial: 1983).
4. *A Fragile Revolution, Consumers and Psychiatric Survivors Confront the Power of the Mental Health System* by Barbara Everett, director of Canadian Mental Health Association-Ontario Division (Wilfred Laurier University Press: 2000)
5. *The Masks of Melancholy* by John White (IVP: 1982)
6. Family Mental Health Support Network of Niagara Inc: 905-684-0073 or at familysn@niagara.com. Other family initiatives can be found by calling your local mental health association.
7. The Schizophrenia Society of Canada: 1-888-SSC-HOPE or 416-445-8204 or www.schizophrenia.ca.

Poetry/Family

Approaching Ascension Day

Linda Siebenga

*crowns and crowning run like threads
through my head as I listen to
music from a Brahms requiem
"How Lovely is Thy Dwelling"
on the Mormon Tabernacle Choir record
a stiff lp resurrected from the closet
to play on this gift turn-table you brought over last week*

*yesterday the whole world could have heard
it broadcast from Westminster Abbey
under arches where coronations had taken place
ascensions to places of rule and honor*

*the crown of the queen mother
jewels over velvet
now on a purple cushion on her coffin
followed by family*

*a peoples' queen who served her people
walked about with them
made reference to the King of kings
who came as servant not master
revealing her faith in the passages
she chose for this day*

*Ecclesiastes' words of aging dying
the spirit returning to God who gave it*

*Revelation's picture of the white-robed
throne before the throne*

*bits of Pilgrim's Progress
"I see myself now at the end of my journey
...see the beloved head with the crown of thorns"*

*words of Bunyan that twigg'd thoughts for me
of an ascension above a field
hosted by homespun friends*

*no trumpets pomp procession
in this fleeting departure obscured by cloud
but a codicil by angels "He will return"*

Mother's (im)mortality

Lini Richarda Grol

*Words pop up in our speech
thoughts eagerly expressed
that startle us suddenly
in the awareness
that these thoughts
are not ours
...but hers.*

*Only now do we see
that our thoughts
are the seeds
from her thoughts
and her deeds,
and all she has sown
in our soul ever since
she conceived us.*



LINI RICHARDA GROL ILLUSTRATION

Marriage, motherhood and measuring success

Twenty-one years ago Mother's Day took on a whole new meaning for me. I progressed from celebrating the event as an associate to full membership status with the birth of our twins. James and Stephanie were only a few days old that Mother's Day in 1981, Jack stood by my bedside in a London hospital room. A good-natured nurse prodded him. "So — what did you bring your wife for Mother's Day?"

"Well... she's not my mother," he replied. The nurse continued to stare at him. "Look," he went on, "I gave her two beautiful babies! What more could she possibly want?"

The stare became a glare and she anchored her hands on her hips. "Be right back," he muttered as he headed down to the hospital gift shop.

A Kodak moment

Minutes later he reappeared with two bud vases, each containing a couple of carnations; one decorated with pink ribbon, the other with blue. He grinned sheepishly, gave me a kiss and whispered, "Happy Mother's Day." It was a Kodak moment.

Last week the Youth Group topic was "Discovering God's Will for My Life." I found myself in a small group with a dozen or so teenage girls. We had a blast talking about their hopes, dreams and expectations. Then I asked how many of them could picture themselves married and having children someday. The reactions were interesting. Most expressed the desire to have a husband and family of their own. A few wanted marriage but not children. Many were concerned that pregnancy is "gross" and childbirth a nightmare. A couple of girls stated they'd rather stay single. I acknowledged that neither marriage nor motherhood appeals to everyone. A woman is no less complete because she prefers to live life as a single person.

No desire to be subservient

Then one rather vocal young lady told me (and everyone else within earshot) that she would *never* get married and had *no desire to be subservient* to anyone. No way was she going to explain to some man every move she makes or outfit she buys. I smiled, remembering similar words coming from my own teenage mouth some years ago, I pointed out to her that marriage brings accountability to both partners, and that accountability fosters security. Men and women both willingly commit themselves to a lifelong relationship and its attendant demands and expectations. Little things just add

Intangible Things

Heidi VanDerSlikke

romance. Often when I buy new clothes I leave the tags on until after I've seen Jack's reaction. Not because he would criticize my choice or fret about the money spent, but because he's the only man on the planet who thinks I'm drop-dead gorgeous and I aim to keep it that way! She laughed, and I told her to look for my face in the crowd someday when she walks down the aisle. I'll be mouthing the words, "I told you so."

How do you know?

Our session ended and most of the girls drifted out the door. But my outspoken friend stayed back and then came the serious question. She told me of a situation in her family where a 16-year marriage suddenly collapsed when her uncle ran away with another woman. "So how do you *know* the marriage will work?" The pain in her eyes made it clear; what she needed now was not some snappy comeback, but an honest answer.

I thought for a moment, then swallowed, "You don't. There are no guarantees. You can only make your commitment and trust the other person for his. That's why it's so important not to rush into any of this. That's why it's so important to stay connected to God, no matter what happens in this life."

I know our conversation isn't finished. I've had a week to think about it now. I need to tell her more, I need to tell her that life, whether married or single, with or without kids of your own, is full of Kodak moments as well as moments you're glad no one has photographed. I need to explain that success isn't measured by an extensive education, glamorous career, or a strong marriage and healthy family life. It isn't even about how well we carry out our commitments, because our best intentions can be overwhelmed by circumstance and disappointment beyond our control. What counts, what makes life worth living, is the commitment

Christ made to us, the promise that the Holy Spirit is always with us, and the security that comes from knowing God. It's that "simply complicated" — consider the lilies.



Heidi VanDerSlikke lives in Harriton, Ont.

Childhood death rate drops in developing world

BALTIMORE, Md. (EP) — World Relief (U.S.) reports that the childhood death rate in the developing world dropped 14 per cent in the past decade. Three million children that would have died had they lived during the 1980s survived childhood during 1990 to 2000.

"Reported news from the developing world is so often negative, but we need to remember that

progress can be made and is being made," says Clive Calver, president of World Relief. The new figures were announced on April 7, which is World Health Day.

Because of help from churches, individuals and government grants, World Relief's intensive child health programs contributed to this significant increase in child survival rates. The biggest killers of children under the age of five in

the developing world are pneumonia, diarrheal disease and measles. Because these illnesses are so treatable or preventable, they are not significant killers in the United States. Lack of resources and knowledge make them deadly illnesses in much of the developing world.

Opinion/News

E.R.

Morris N. Greidanus

I was standing behind the yellow line in the emergency department of Spectrum: Butterworth Hospital in downtown Grand Rapids, watching as the staff worked on an accident victim, catching remarks about his condition as they were shouted back and forth, and jotting them down on my 3x5 card.

Nosy? Not really!

I was there for my first shift as volunteer night chaplain. The pastoral care department at the hospital offers the opportunity to community pastors to be in the hospital on call overnight for one night a month.

I came in near 8:00 p.m., met with the staff chaplain for reports and to get final instructions. Then he left me with a pager and a set of keys to the overnight room, where I could leave my things, study, watch TV, phone, sleep, etc.

A 'comfort quilt'

After getting a bit familiar with the phone, pager, and paperwork, I moved around the hospital to meet the staff on various floors, especially the critical care areas where family members may want to talk.

The pager went off. I called the number, and the nurse asked for a "comfort quilt" for an elderly



BALTIMORE ALBUM QUILT (CA. 1847-50) BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART

The nurse asked for a "comfort quilt" for an elderly patient. Local churches provide these quilts for those who are near death. The quilts are warm, they demonstrate that other people care, some churches attach a prayer to them, and family members may take them home.

patient. The stack of three-foot-square quilts in the pastoral care office had been explained to me in my orientation. Local churches

provide these quilts for those who are near death. The quilts are warm, they demonstrate that other people care, some churches attach a prayer to them, and family members may take them home. I selected a suitable quilt, brought it to the family, talked a while, and prayed with them.

Another call asked me to talk to an elderly patient who was agitated and wanted to talk about her faith

and her standing with God. A nurse was sitting with her but thought that a talk with a chaplain would help.

Constantly on call

But the pager went again. It did not give a number to call, but I learned that this meant I had to go to the emergency department. The social worker and the chaplain meet all trauma cases in order to assist any family members that are there or may be coming. That's why I was taking notes. Relatives were driving in. The social worker and I shared information; she would meet the relatives and notify me later.

Now I could go and see the second call. I met the elderly patient, had to listen hard for awhile just to understand her in her agitation. Soon I could get a question in, and after time some words. I read two of her favorite Psalms (91 and 23), prayed with her, and she settled in to sleep.

The hospital was also settling in for the night. I directed someone to the parking lot. Talked and walked a bit with a disgruntled patient who was taking his TV for a walk, watched some TV, read my book, and got almost five hours of sleep.

At 6:00 a.m. I checked on the patients of the evening. The gentleman who received the comfort quilt had died, his family had gone home. The accident victim's mother sat by his bed and we talked. The elderly lady was still sleeping.

I filled in my reports and at 8:00 a.m. handed the keys and

the pager back to the staff chaplains.

Good change in healthcare

As I went home to a fairly busy day I reflected on this good change in healthcare. In Medicine Hat, where I began my ministry, pastors were allowed to visit their members but were considered a nuisance. "Visitors mean infection," the hospital administrator said. Now hospitals such as Butterworth in Grand Rapids, Mich., are concerned about the total well-being of the patients, including their spiritual well-being. Staff chaplains offer care, there's a chapel for private meditation and a weekly service, and local pastors are encouraged to visit their members. Even in the rushed atmosphere of the "holding area" before surgery, a pastoral prayer is welcomed. I've had the nurse join in with an "amen." And if a doctor I know is there seeing the patient, he will ask, "Have you prayed yet?"

A less positive change is that privacy laws have caused hospitals to shield their religious affiliation lists. Most pastors can no longer find out from a binder or a computer that a member of his/her church is in the hospital. The member has to let the pastor or elder know. Our congregation is quite good about informing me, the office, or the elder, and because of the changed legal situation we count on that call.

Some of this change I knew before, but I learned more about it as I had time to talk to the woman at the information desk and read the bulletins in the pastoral care office.

So that was my first night as volunteer night chaplain. I did not see anyone from our church, although I met relatives and friends of church members, but I felt that the pastoral care we offer our members has stretched a little to include more of the community. I went home tired — good tired.

Considering ecumenism

... continued from page 7

self-critically, perhaps, than we would prefer.

The author also indicates that ecumenism pushes us to ask how much we truly care about brothers and sisters in Christ suffering from persecution, starvation, disease, or disaster elsewhere in the world. We all know how easy it is to punch the button on the remote when those uncomfortable pictures come up. But if, as the apostle says, when one member of the body [the church] hurts, the whole body hurts (1 Cor. 12:26), how can it be that we don't hurt with them? What does that say about our love for these fellow Christians? What does that say about us as members of the body? VanElderren doesn't hit us with unfair shots — but he won't let us off with cheap answers, either.

Much to ponder

There is much to ponder in the 82 editorials collected in this volume. Each is two to three pages in length — enough to offer a striking insight, humorous reflection, or challenging perspective in a few

minutes' reading. It is not a book to rush, but to savor: rich in ecumenical experience and steeped in humble wisdom, the editorials collected here open up a window on an ecumenical movement much different from the one of our suspicious fears. Ecumenism has its problems, yes; but it also opens the possibility for service and growth.

We lost a treasure with the untimely passing of Marlin VanElderren. How much the CRC (and other conservative churches) could have benefited from his insights on and experience in that ecumenical movement we have so long avoided. But we have not entirely lost his voice: with this volume, "he being dead still speaks."

This is a book we need to read and ponder, so that we can consider ecumenism and its challenge as he did. May our response be as blessed and productive as his was.

James R. Payton, Jr., served eight years as a pastor in Reformed denominations and is now Professor of History at Redeemer University College, in Ancaster, Ontario.

Natasha Postuma moves on from Christian Courier



CC Staff

For close to two years, Natasha Postuma has been working as accounts manager at Christian Courier. Starting in late April, she began working full-time with Gary Van Eyk, a certified management accountant in St. Catharines, Ont., who happens to be her father, as well as chair of the board of Reformed Faith Witness.

The staff of Christian Courier has appreciated Natasha's efficiency, energy and sense of humor, and wishes the best for her and God's blessings with her new position.

Ineke Strayer-Medcalf has taken over the accounts manager position, while Rose der Nederlanden is focusing on our circulation department.



Ty Hofman asked Morris Greidanus to take his place for awhile as another Canadian-American living in Grand Rapids, Mich. Greidanus has served at First CRC, Grand Rapids since 1985, and

reflects on some changes in pastoral care to the sick from his first church in Medicine Hat, Alberta.

News Comment

News roundup

Note: Bert Hielema is on vacation this week. His nose will be back next issue, slightly bent.

Harry der Nederlanden

With all the accusations of sex abuse popping up like dandelions in spring, the Catholic Church feels itself under siege. This time it's not just about isolated incidents of priestly failures. The revelation that those higher up in the hierarchy did little or nothing to stop some of the abusers really makes the church itself look corrupt, as if it was more interested in protecting the institution than the children to whom it ministers. Apparently the priest in Boston, whose story launched the investigations, even made public speeches arguing that sex with men is good for boys.

Landslide has begun

Now that the landslide has begun, the Catholic Church finds it hard to defend itself or its priests in any way — even those who may be innocent. It seems clear that the Church was involved in several cover-ups over the years. Anything it now says in defense sounds like a further cover-up.

Of course, the newspapers and magazines can't resist all this salacious material, and they've been covering the story from every conceivable angle. The roots of the sex abuse have been found in everything from religion itself to celibacy and the high number of homosexuals in the priesthood. To its own people, the Catholic Church has been saying that the incidence of abuse among the priesthood is no higher than among the general population; that celibacy is not to blame because married men are just as likely to be abusers; that homosexuals are no more likely to be child molesters than heterosexuals; and that charges that it has been doing nothing to address these problems are false. Many of these claims are true, but they do little or nothing to restore the bond of trust between clergy and lay people in the Catholic church.

At first Pope John Paul said the American church would handle the scandal, but as people began calling for the removal of some of the higher clergy, he very quickly called a conference in the Vatican to deal with the problem. This is no longer an instance of a sick priest here and there who has violated his office and created a scandal that will soon blow over. This seems to most observers endemic, requiring radical surgery. The romantic picture of the priest as a sort of holy man immune to temptations of the



Charles Colson (left) and James Dobson have both been outspoken against homosexuality.



CHRISTIAN COURIER FILE PHOTOS

flesh has certainly been destroyed. Some American Catholics are calling for a dramatic intervention to restore the badly damaged trust — such as an end to priestly celibacy.

David Tracy, a prominent Catholic theologian, has called for a "democratization of the present structure," that is, a greater leadership role for the laity.

Over the last decade, far fewer young men have been drawn to the priesthood. The number of priests under 40 has dropped drastically in many dioceses because there are so few new priests. This scandal can only make matters worse. The news that more and more the priesthood is becoming a gay occupation is causing many pious Catholic parents who used to encourage their sons to become priests to actively discourage them.

High percentage of gays in priesthood

A recent book authored by a loyal priest with a PhD in psychology claims that the percentage of gays in the priesthood is much higher than in the general population. He quotes an estimate by one former priest who taught in three different seminaries that one-third of the seminarians were homosexually inclined. The author, however, is not against ordaining gay men, whom he describes as often "nurturing, intelligent, talented and sensitive — qualities especially suited to the ministry." However, many homosexual priests are not celibate.

Charles Colson dismisses the idea that celibacy may be one of the root causes of pedophilia among priests. He describes as nonsense the notion that not acting on your sexual impulses may warp a person. It is homosexuality that is at the root of the problem. Most of the accused priests are not strictly pedophiles either; pedophiles also prey on girls and usually on younger children. Most of the

sexual interaction by priests has been with teenage boys. According to statistics cited by Colson, homosexuals are far more likely to seek sex with boys. The secular press, he suggests, has been reluctant to bring out this factor for fear of being accused of homophobia.

Whatever the causes, although they are in some ways unique to the culture of the Catholic Church, Protestants leaders have rightly been reluctant to point fingers or comment; it is a blot on the church of Christ as a whole, and we can only grieve with our Catholic brothers and sisters.

Dobson opposes pro-gay agenda of public schools

James Dobson, founder of Focus on the Family, is urging Christian parents in California not to send their kids to public schools because of their pro-homosexual agenda. Focus on the Family has opposed "radical bills" that would "require teachers to tell children that homosexuality is normal and that anybody who objects is hateful."

"If these bills are passed, homosexual activists will likely use California's schools to destroy the Christian ideas about sexuality that parents teach at home," Focus on the Family warned last year.

A commentary published by the Southern Baptist Press said: "Under the guise of safe sex and safe schools, i.e. to insure no homosexual child — or child with same-sex households — is harassed, tax-funded education already introduces the concept of homosexuality as morally equivalent to heterosexuality. Public schools in the west, led by California, are blazing this 'progressive' trail. Some schools even begin in kindergarten introducing children to the concept of homosexuality as a normal part of life." Getting perhaps a little hysterical, the article asks how long before they begin suggesting that sex between adults and children is normal. That does

come pretty close to homophobia. Linking respect for children from same-sex families with pedophilia is nasty politics.

It is true, however, that in some circles condemnation of homosexual behavior is considered not just politically incorrect but almost a hate crime.

Dutch, UN share blame

A report commissioned by the Dutch government on the 1995 massacre of 8,000 Muslim men and boys in Bosnia says Dutch peacekeepers and the UN share blame for the massacre. Srebrenica had been declared a "safe area" by the UN where Muslims could receive sanctuary.

The report says that the Dutch battalion of about 600 men operated on the principle that its presence alone was enough to deter trouble. It had no detailed plan to protect the population, certainly not to fight or to invoke outside military assistance, such as air cover.

When the Serbs sent buses to pick up Muslim men and boys, sorting them out from women and children, the Dutch troops stood by and did nothing. The Dutch commander accepted the Serb commander's explanation that he was screening the captives for war criminals, while the Dutch soldiers had become fearful for their own safety.

When word of the atrocity emerged, the credibility of the UN's peacekeeping efforts in the former Yugoslavia virtually collapsed. In Holland, the inactivity of the Dutch troops caused a national scandal.

The Interchurch Peace Council (IKV), a Dutch non-governmental organization based in The Hague, urged the Dutch government to accept responsibility for the mistakes, apologize to survivors and relatives of the victims and offer them compensation. It accused the leaders of being more concerned about the safety of the Dutch troops than of the Muslim civilians they were protecting. The Serbs offered them safe passage if they turned over the men.

A week after the report was published, the Dutch government resigned over the fallout.

Artistic merit and child pornography

A judge in a British Columbia court ruled that writings by convicted pedophile John Sharpe describing children being sexually molested and even raped were not technically pornography because they possessed "artistic merit". Though the judge said he found the

materials objectionable, he nevertheless ruled that "they had some objective artistic value." He explained that the basis for his decision was not "community standards of decency" but the wording of the Canadian Criminal Code.

The judgement, of course, immediately raised the ire of many Christian groups like Focus on the Family and other groups like the Canada Family Coalition (CFC) devoted to protecting children. The CFC is calling on parents to petition the government to amend the child pornography section of the criminal code to delete the term "artistic merit." You can even "sign" the petition on their website.

Legal sledgehammer

However, to insist on the deletion of "artistic merit" from the law is to pound tiny tacks with a sledge hammer. You're liable to smash your fingers. Novels that deal responsibly with the subject of sexuality and children under the age of responsibility, such as Nabokov's *Lolita*, will also be classed as pornography. What of novels that touch on sex between teens, something we all know is happening and has long been happening? Will such works also fall under a ban that does away with artistic merit?

A couple of weeks ago I finished an excellent novel *Painted House* by John Grisham. No one would call it pornographic; in fact, I think it is a Christian novel. In it, however, a seventeen-year-old girl plays with the desires of a seven-year-old boy, allowing him to watch as she bathes in the river. Some years ago, the outstanding Catholic writer, Walker Percy, wrote a novel in which sexual acts with children are portrayed quite graphically. The images are not pornographic, however; they are instead a powerful metaphor to underline the slide into hedonism and a life without objective moral standards that Percy sees emerging in America. I suspect that if we write the law against pornography too broadly — as this proposal does — we will deprive ourselves of many works of great merit.

From descriptions I've read in the papers, there's no doubt in my mind that Sharpe's work is blatant pornography without artistic merit. We used to entrust that judgement to a group of censors. No longer. Now we have to write laws in a way that leaves no room for such "subjective" evaluation. Can it be done? I don't know. But the CFC petition will cause as many problems as it solves.

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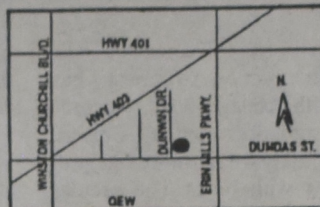
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Classifieds	Anniversaries	Anniversaries	Birthday
<p>As of May 1999: Note: 7% GST will be added to all prices listed below.</p> <p>DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION <i>Christian Courier</i> is published on alternate Mondays. Copy deadline for each issue is 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, thirteen days prior to publication date.</p> <p>RATES All personal and family announcements: \$16.00 per column inch (pci) + GST (columns are two inches wide). Display advertising re.: businesses and organizations: minimum \$18.20 pci + GST, depending on design and frequency.</p> <p>PHOTOS There is a processing fee of \$25 for the inclusion of a photograph with a personal or family announcement. Photo space is not charged pci, but we reserve the right to determine published photo size. Please note that we cannot use a faxed photo. We need either an original (which we will return) or a downloadable Internet image.</p> <p>PERSONAL ADS <i>Christian Courier</i> would be pleased to handle your personal ad in an efficient and discreet manner. The cost to set up a personal file under a unique file number is \$35. Ads requesting correspondence with this file are run at \$16 pci per insertion. All correspondence is immediately forwarded unopened.</p> <p>NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS We offer a \$25 one-year subscription to couples whose wedding is announced in <i>Christian Courier</i> and to parents who announce the birth of a child in our paper. Please let us know when placing your ad that you want to take advantage of this offer.</p> <p>SUBMITTING YOUR AD mail: <i>Christian Courier</i> #4 - 261 Martindale Road St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1 fax: 905-682-8313 email: ccadpromo@aol.com</p> <p>OTHER INFORMATION a) <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format. And editing style. b) Please provide us with clear copy. <i>Christian Courier</i> is not responsible for any errors due to hand written or phoned-in advertisements.</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Golden Memories JAN and GEERTJE POOL</p> <p>May 5th, 1937 Jan and Geertje Pool's life is one of pioneering, faith, hope, love and perseverance. Jan married Geertje on May 5th, 1937, in Ommen, Holland. In 1947 Jan and Geertje, with three small children, boarded the first immigrant ship, De Waterman, and moved to Lacombe, Alberta. Two years later, Jan bought a quarter of land with seven acres clear land in Rocky Mountain House, 60 miles down the road. Grandpa worked hard and cleared another 40 acres by hand the next two years. Life was primitive, hard and lonesome. The house had only the bare necessities with no water, bathroom, electricity or central heating. "We had running water if we ran with it ourselves," says Geertje. Drinking water was hard to come by. When the temperature dipped to 40 below zero, Jan hauled water on a sleigh with a team of horses from a neighbor two miles down the road. The Pools' arrival in Rocky Mountain House made them the second pioneer family in Christian Reformed Church plantings in the area. The two families began to hold church services in their own homes twice a Sunday every week. This small beginning branched out into two CRCs with a 180-family membership today. But life across the Rocky Mountains, with a milder climate in the lush green Fraser Valley in B.C. became increasingly more attractive to them. And in due time the family moved to the Fraser Valley near Abbotsford, B.C., where Jan was in his glory by doing what he liked best, making a living by milking cows and farming the land. Grandpa Pool dedicated himself to helping people in need. He helped build three more churches and pounded many nails in Christian schools everywhere, proving his unflinching love and dedication to his Father in heaven and the task he was meant to do here on earth. Grandma Pool became famous for her hospitality and mocha cake baking. Everyone asks for the recipe, but Grandma says, "Absolutely no! The recipe must stay in the family. It is a bakers secret!" Today Jan and Geertje live in the Ebenezer Christian Senior Citizens Home in Abbotsford, B.C. Their four children, eleven grandchildren, nineteen great-grandchildren and the in-laws do think the world of Grandma and Grandpa Pool. We thank you for the many great memories you've given us. God bless you both. Love from us all!</p>	<p>With praise and thanks to God for his faithfulness, we wish to announce the 50th Wedding Anniversary of: JOE and KATHLEEN MOLENAAR Open House will be held at Trenton Christian School on May 11th from 2-4 p.m. Best Wishes Only.</p> <p>1952 May 29 2002 Ruinerwold Neth. Clinton Ont. With thankfulness to God we announce the 50th anniversary of our parents and grandparents: LUBBERT and ALICE STEENBERGEN (Karsten) Bill & Ellen Steenbergen - Cambridge Alicia & Scott, Maureen, Nathan Peter Steenbergen - Drayton Karen, Don, Lisa, Ken Henry & Bernice Steenbergen - Abbotsford, B.C. Melinda, Dan, Josh, Ben Fanny & Nick Geleynse - Clinton Jessica, Steve, Ryan, Brad, Alison Marg & Jesse Terpstra - Mt. Brydges Tyler, Lauren, Mitchell Alina & Ralph Wigboldus - Sarnia Eric, Amy, Megan, Ian Hilma Steenbergen - Lansing Mich. Open House Saturday, June 1, 3:30-5, Clinton CRC Home Address: 183 Spenser St., Clinton ON N0M 1L0</p> <p>1952 June 7 2002 Port Credit, Ont. Norval, Ont. "Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart." (Psalm 37:4) With joy and gratitude to God, we wish to congratulate our parents, FRANK and HENDRIKA VAN OFWEGEN (nee De Zoete) on the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary. May God continue to bless you, Dad and Mom, and cause you to be a blessing to others. Love: Jean & Andy deBeer - Saskatoon, Sask. Jeremy & Collette (Ottawa, Ont.), Chris, Amy James & Donna van Ofwegen - Brampton, Ont. Joel, Mark, Lindsey Roy & Sally van Ofwegen - Norval, Ont. Kristy, Jeff, Andrew Steve & Jessica van Ofwegen - Orangeville, Ont. Stephanie, Jenine Cindy & Bill Dykstra - Orillia, Ont. Home address: 538 Guelph St., Norval, ON L0P 1K0 We invite all those who wish to congratulate our parents on their 50th wedding anniversary to attend an Open House on Sat., June 8th from 2-4 p.m. at Second CRC, Brampton, 444 Steeles Ave. W., Brampton, Ont.</p>	 <p>On May 22 D.V., we her family, will give thanks to God for the 90 years he has given to our Mother, Oma and Great-Oma, Klazina Elizabeth Arends (nee Oomres) We hope to celebrate this happy event with an Open House on May 25 from 2:30 - 5:00 P.M. at Shalem Manor, 3010-51 St. SW Calgary, Alta. Home address: same as above, Apt. 205.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Obituaries</p> <p>The Lord took to himself our dear husband, father, grandfather and great grandfather HARRY (HARM) MARTINUS RIEPMA at the age of 78 on April 9, 2002. Beloved husband of Evelyn Riepma (Aukema). Father of: Clare & Judy Riepma - Georgetown Teresa and William Renkema - Lowell, Mich. Alice and Randy Van Stempvoort - Chatham Betty and Ernie Kramer - Thamesville Shirley and Kirk Larsen - Decorah, Iowa Emily and Eric Schuurman - Brownsville 24 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by daughter-in-law Alma Riepma (Jonker). Funeral was held on April 12, 2002 at the Grace Christian Reformed Church, Chatham. Correspondence address: 5 Faubert Dr. Chatham, ON N7M 2Y1</p> <p>Nov. 1, 1917 April 7, 2002 Makkum, Fr., the Neth. Hamilton, Ont. Called home by His Heavenly Father OEGE BOUMA "God's grace has saved you because of your faith in Christ," Ephesians 2:8a Peacefully, the Lord took home into eternal glory a loving husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. Husband for 56 years to Audrey. Elaine & Leo Smit - Barrie, Ont. Kristin & Richard Klein, Bronwyn & Nathaniel - Grand Rapids, Mich. Len - Abbotsford, B.C. Danielle - Edmonton, Alta. Matthew - Hamilton, Ont. Tony & Ann Bouma - Calgary, Alta. Peter & Lori Brian, Diana, Jaclyn, Monique, Marisa Okke Bouma - (deceased 1976) Arie & Grace Bouma - Hamilton Natalie, Simon The funeral service was held on April 11, 2002 at the Immanuel Christian Reformed Church, Hamilton, Ontario. Rev. H. Kranenburg officiated. Home Address: 216 - 337 Stone Church Rd. E., Hamilton, ON L9B 1B1</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Anniversary</p> <p>1962 May 11 2002 We are happy to announce the 40th anniversary of our parents: RALPH and THERESA FLEDDERUS (nee Huisman) "Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God." Romans 15:7 Mom and Dad, you have been a witness to us, both in your Christian walk, and in your love for one another. We share so many good times together, and we pray that you may continue to be "strong in the Lord." With love from your family: Lyn & Steve Marfisi - Guelph, Ont. Alyssa, Philip, Amelia Carolyn & Stephen Tolcamp - Waterdown, Ont. Joshua, Samantha Ralph and Theresa can be reached at: 21 Fairmeadow Dr., Guelph, Ont., Canada N1H 6X2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Call <i>Christian Courier</i> today to place your family ad: 1-800-969-4838.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">For Sale</p> <p>Boat for Sale - Charger</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> perfect for waterskiing Yamaha 115 Horse Power Ski Pole, Skies Trailer - shore lander - aluminum rims 2 covers, 2 prop. <p>Excellent condition If you love waterskiing, you must check it out! Call 905-934-1952</p> <p style="text-align: center;">For Rent</p> <p>Bachelor apartment, St. Catharines, bright, basement, in quiet home. \$450 includes utilities, cable, laundry. Available immediately or Sept. No smoking. 905-383-5848 (Ria)</p> <p>One or two bedroom apartment on main floor of house within walking distance to Beacon Christian Schools in St. Catharines. Available for year or more. Contact Ria at 905-383-5848.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Bed & Breakfast</p> <p>Visiting the Niagara Peninsula? Stay for a night or more at: "Travellers Home Bed & Breakfast" 2666 Eighth Avenue, Vineland, ON L0R 1S0 Call 905-562-5656 for more info. All ensuite rooms. Also motorhome for rent. www.jdnet.nl/travellershome</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Send your classified ads to us at: ccadpromo@aol.com</p>	

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Obituaries		Obituary	Teachers
Nov. 9, 1938 Edmonton, Alta.	Apr. 15, 2002 Chatham, Ont.	<p>The Congregation and Council of the Grace Christian Reformed Church, Chatham, Ontario offers its warm and sincere sympathy to Benna Nicolai and her children, Annamarie & Rick, Walter & Leanne Randy, Jana her grandchildren - Aaron, Kyle, Alex when God called home his child, their husband, father, and grandfather</p> <p>PETER NICOLAI</p> <p>on Monday, April 15, 2002</p> <p>May they richly experience God's blessing and comfort in the time ahead. Rev. Peter Nicolai was a minister in the Christian Reformed Church. He served Grace Church, and lived in Chatham since August, 1996 He will be sorely missed but we all look to God for our hope and peace!</p>	<p>JARVIS, ONT.: Jarvis District Christian School invites applications from qualified teachers for a definite full-time Grade 5 teaching position for a class of 23 pupils. Please send your letter of application, resume, inquiries, etc. to: Mr. Garry Glasbergen, Principal Jarvis District Christian School PO Box 520 Jarvis, ON N0A 1J0 PH: (519) 587-4444 (school) (905) 765-7919 (home) Fax: (519) 587-2985 e-mail: jdcsc@kwie.com web-site: www.jdcsc.ca</p>
<p>PETER NICOLAI GOD'S CHILD is home with His Lord.</p> <p>Left behind in sorrow are: his wife, Benna Nicolai, his children, Annamarie & Rick Wymenga Walter Nicolai & Leanne Randy Nicolai Jana Nicolai his grandchildren, Aaron, Kyle and Alexandra, his brothers and sisters, his many nephews and nieces, his friends, and the Congregation of Grace Christian Reformed Church of Chatham, Ontario.</p> <p>"Jehovah Jireh is our provider."</p> <p>If you wish to make a memorial contribution please do so to the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, 2850 Kalamazoo Ave. Grand Rapids MI 49560-0600</p>	<p>On Sunday, March 24 2002, JOHN DE JONG was taken home to be with his Lord and Savior. He passed away peacefully while surrounded by family after a brief and courageous battle with cancer. John was in his 75th year and will be sadly missed by his loving wife, Jean (nee Guetter) and their seven children: Neil & Kathy De Jong - Burlington Anja & Rich Cameron - Northbrook George & Nancy Hoytema - Surrey, B.C. Ineke & Terry Deonarain - Port Perry Jon Hoytema - Clinton Renee & Perry Steinhilber - Surrey, Gene & Wendy Hoytema - Langley, B.C.</p> <p>Predeceased by a wonderful daughter-in-law, Donna Hoytema (2001), and sister, Nel De Jong (1929). Forever remembered by 11 grandsons and 11 granddaughters, as well as two sisters, Nel and Johann Schipper of Vancouver, B.C. and Ali and Wim Van Ogten of Vianen, Netherlands.</p> <p>We give thanks to our Lord that He answered our prayers. He spared John unnecessary suffering and blessed him with peace.</p> <p>The funeral service was held on March 28, 2002 at the Community Christian Reformed Church in Kitchener, Ontario. Rev. H. Bierman and Rev. B. De Jonge officiated. Interment in Clinton Cemetery at later date.</p> <p>Send correspondence to: Jean DeJong, 41 Catalina Court, Kitchener, Ontario N2M 5L9</p>		<p>AYLMER, ONT.: Immanuel Christian School, Aylmer, has a definite teacher opening for the next school year. If you are interested in joining our dedicated teaching team, please call the school at: 519-773-8476. Resumes sent to: Attention: Marianne Vangoor Immanuel Christian School 75 Cavedy Rd, Aylmer, Ontario NSH 2P6</p>
<p>Garyp, Fries. St. Thomas, Ont. Feb. 22, 1912 Apr. 13, 2002 Psalm 73: 23 & 24</p> <p>A few weeks after his 90th birthday, God took home His child, our father, grandfather and great-grandfather (Pake)</p> <p>RAY(Reinder) WYMENGA Predeceased by: his wife Susan (Syke Sibma) Jan. 1997; his eldest daughter Sadie Dykxhoorn, Jan. 1986; grandson Terence VanderKloet, Apr. 1984; and great-grandson Jason Steenbergen, Dec. 1981.</p> <p>His Children: Margaret & Harry VanderKloet - Dundas, Ont Lou & Willy Dykxhoorn - Springfield, Ont. His Grandchildren & Great-grandchildren: Charlie & Irene Dykxhoorn - Springfield, Ont. Daniel, Sandi, Greg, Karla Marjorie & George Steenbergen - Aylmer, Ont. Crystal, Calvin, Jamie, Dennis, Carl Roy Dykxhoorn & Madison - Aylmer, Ont. Lawrence Dykxhoorn - St. Thomas, Ont. Patricia & Rob VanderKruk - Waterdown, Ont. Kaitlyn, Alannah, Ryan Geoff & Lisa VanderKloet - Utterson, Ont. Sonja VanderKloet - Somerville, N.B. Heather & Mike Zylstra - Utterson, Ont. Bret, Madelyn Melanie & Mark Buitenhuis - Washago, Ont. Jessica & Jeff Cote - Brampton, Ont.</p> <p>The funeral service was held at the St. Thomas First Christian Reformed Church with Rev. Dirk Miedema officiating. Mailing Address: Margaret VanderKloet, 1178 Sodom Rd. Dundas ON L9H 5E2</p>	<p>But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinth. 15:57</p> <p>June 29, 1931 - April 15, 2002 WIEBE POSTMA went home to be with His Lord and Saviour. Beloved husband of Janny Postma-van Til. Loving father and grandfather of: Eleanor & John Kuyvenhoven - Wingham Jordan & Melissa, Janelle, Jessa, Jontue Betty Ann & Bert Siersema - Blyth Albert, Lee, Emi Deb & Mike Siersema - Blyth Luke, Mark, Meghan, Natalie, Shannon Jim & Alice Postma - Abbotsford, BC Lindsay, Jenny, Wesley Teresa & Rick Peachey - Stratford Sarah and Jacob</p> <p>Also survived by one brother and six sisters, predeceased by three brothers and one sister. Funeral Service was held at the Clinton Christian Reformed Church on Friday April 19th, 2002. Dear friend of the family, Pastor Alvin Beukema from Abbotsford B.C. officiated. Correspondence address: Janny Postma, Box 1591, 146 King Street, Clinton, Ontario N0M 1L0</p>	<p>Church Anniversaries</p> <p>It is with thanksgiving for God's faithfulness that Mountainview Christian Reformed Church of Grimsby, Ontario, joyfully invites you to be part of our 40th anniversary celebration service at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, June 9, 2002. All present and former members are invited to participate in worship and fellowship.</p>	<p>Personals</p> <p>Christian Lady, 51, living in central Ontario interested in meeting Christian gentleman. Reply to: File # 2732, c/o Christian Courier, 4 - 261 Martindale Rd. St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1</p> <p>Christian Lady 65+ would like to meet Christian gentleman of similar age. Reply to: File # 2721 c/o Christian Courier, 4 - 261 Martindale Rd. St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1</p> <p>Hard-working, energetic Christian man in mid 20's, who enjoys life, is interested in meeting a sincere, outgoing young lady. Reply to: File # 2733 c/o Christian Courier, 4 - 261 Martindale Rd. St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1</p> <p>55-year-old male would like to meet Christian lady. I am easygoing and down-to-earth. I enjoy the outdoors, camping, country drives, and spending time with family and friends. Reply to: File #2729 c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd. St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1</p>
<p>Call Christian Courier today to place your family ad: 1-800-969-4838.</p>		<p>Job Opportunity</p>	<p>Miscellaneous</p> <p>Huntley's Used Christian Books at 114 Lake St., St. Catharines, ON L2R 5X8. We buy and sell used Christian books. Open Tuesday - Saturday 10:00 - 5:00. 905-988-9223 e-mail: books@interpc.ca</p>
<p>REDEEMER University College</p>		<p>THE CAMBRIDGE (MARANATHA) CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH would like to invite all friends and former congregations of Pastor Ralph and Anne Koops to give thanks to God for their ministry at a retirement celebration which will take place at Forward Baptist Church, 455 Myers Road, Cambridge, ON on Saturday, June 22, 2002 at 7:30 p.m. Anyone wishing to participate in the program or would like more information, please contact Mary VanderMunnik at 519-623-3788 or Ann Fluit 519-623-5261. Farewell service will be held June 23, 2002 at 10:00 a.m. at Maranatha Christian Reformed Church, 94 Elgin St. S., Cambridge, ON for those who would like to attend.</p>	<p>1962 40th ANNIVERSARY 2002 GRACE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH WELLAND, ONTARIO</p> <p>All former pastors, members and friends of the congregation are cordially invited to help us celebrate on May 11 & 12, 2002. There will be a Potluck Supper on Saturday May 11th at 6:30 p.m. A Sunday Morning Thanksgiving service will be held with participation from former pastors. For more information please call: David Van Lochem at 905-892-9947.</p>
<p>Redeemer University College welcomes applications for possible part-time faculty positions in the following departments for the 2002/03 academic year:</p> <p>Business (Auditing) Education Environmental Studies (Introduction) Physical Education Sociology (Work and Occupations) Theatre Arts and Communications</p> <p>Applicants should possess a Master's degree or Doctorate, and should be in agreement with the Reformed Christian basis of the University.</p> <p>Deadline: May 15, 2002 or when filled.</p> <p>Consult the Redeemer website: http://redeemer.on.ca/about/openings.html for a full description.</p> <p>Direct applications and the names and addresses of three references to:</p> <p>Dr. Wytse van Dijk Vice-President (Academic), Redeemer University College 777 Garner Rd. E., Ancaster, Ontario, Canada L9K 1J4 Fax: 905/648-2134, E-mail: vandijk@redeemer.on.ca</p> <p><i>All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply; however, Canadians and permanent residents will be given priority.</i></p>		<p>Church News</p> <p>Address Change Rev. Jack Westerhof, trained interim pastor, 1332 Murphy Rd, Sarnia, ON N7S 2Y6, Phone: 519-542-6658. E-mail: jackw@tct.net</p> <p>Call Accepted To First Christian Reformed Church, Guelph, Ontario, Sharlene Oosthoek of Bethel Christian Reformed Church, Waterdown, Ontario, as minister of congregational life.</p>	<p>The Living Word Sermons for reading services. Contact: CRC R. Vander Ploeg, Sec./Treas. 37 Brick Pond Lane Woodstock, ON N4V 1G1 Phone: (519) 539-2117</p>

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Orillia Christian School
Attn: Mrs. Carla Yorke

Box 862

Orillia, ON L3V 6K8

Ph: 705-326-0532

Fax: 705-326-0532

E-mail:

info@orilliachristianschool.com

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Mr. Larry Simpson, Principal
Vernon Christian School
6890 Pleasant Valley Road
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Immanuel Christian Reformed Church, 61 Mohawk Road West
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Job Opportunities

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For more information, see www.crcna.org. A detailed job description is available upon request. For consideration, submit your resume and letter of interest by May 24, 2002.

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Wilma Runia, Chair of Council, Calvin CRC

7 Gilbey Dr, Ottawa ON Canada K2E 5S4

Ph: 613-225-6468 Fax: 613-225-1132

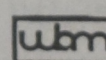
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(NC)—OTTAWA — Community, non-profit groups and organizations can receive financial support for projects that have measurable, positive impacts on the environment from Environment Canada's EcoAction Community Funding Program.

EcoAction encourages projects that protect, rehabilitate or enhance the natural environment and builds the capacity of communities to sustain these activities into the future. Projects require matching funds or in-kind support of their own or from other sponsors. Priority for funding is given to projects that will achieve results in the following areas: clean air and climate change, clean water and nature.

Groups eligible include, but are not limited to: First Nations councils, service clubs, associations, youth and senior organization. With emphasis in Environment Week this year on community action for the environment, it may be the impetus for a range of new projects. Check the Website at www.ec.gc.ca.

Submissions for developing a project and on other sources of funding is February 1 and October 1.

- News Canada

Cars and the Environment

(NC)—Thoughtful care and use of automobiles is one way that most people can help reduce the amount of carbon dioxide emitted into the atmosphere. Environment Week, June 2 to 8, may be a good time to take stock of the following facts:

- Fewer cars on the road mean fewer emissions that contribute to climate change and smog.
- Studies show higher smog levels mean more hospital admissions for people with respiratory problems. Help your neighbours and yourself by leaving your car home more.
- Replace dirty air filters in your car; your fuel consumption will drop.
- Manual transmissions use less fuel.

- News Canada

Events



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When: June 5, 7:00 p.m. - June 6, 10:00 p.m. 2002

Where: Redeemer University College, Ancaster, ON

To register contact: Rev. Andrew Beunk

ph. (905) 643-4340; fax. (905) 643-4199 email: abeunk69@calvin.edu

Cost: \$69 conference only; \$91 with meals; \$149 with meals/lodging

Seminar for ELDERS: Thurs. June 6, 7:00 p.m. Cost: \$5

Miscellaneous

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Miscellaneous

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Events/Advertising

Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is \$7.50 per line, or \$1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion.

- May 4** Chapel Singers, West Lincoln Hospital Benefit Concert, Mountainview CRC, Grimsby, Ont.
May 4 Cephas CRC, Peterborough, Ont. 50th Anniv. Dinner May 4, Special Services May 5. For information, call: 705-743-5918 E-mail: gjheersink@juno.com
May 3-13 The King's University College Concert & Chamber Choirs Tour See ad April 22nd issue for dates and times in your area.
May 8 Grace CRC, Welland, Ont. 40th Anniversary Supper and Service. See ad this issue.
May 8-14 Groot Nederlands Mannenkoor & Liberation Choir, Ontario Cities Tour, Bowmanville, May 8, Guelph, May 9, Chatham, May 10, Ancaster, May 11, St. Catharines, May 14. Call 905-631-1929 for info or see Apr 22nd issue.
June 1,2 Williamsburg CRC 50th anniversary, Williamsburg, Ont. See ad in this issue.
June 1,2 Mount Hamilton CRC, Hamilton, Ont. 50th Anniversary Open house and special worship. Call 905-383-8315 or visit www.mthamiltoncra.org
June 9 Mountainview CRC, Grimsby, Ont. 40th anniversary service and fellowship at 10 a.m. See ad this issue.
June 12 Hollandse Dag 10 uur in de Moorefield Community Center. See ad next issue.
June 15 Spring of Hope Concert, Wine Tour, Dinner & Concert at Stonechurch Vineyards in Niagara -on-the-Lake and featuring the Ambassador Chr. Male Chorus. Proceeds to Niagara Warehouse of Hope and Chr. Ref. World Mission (water & medical projects in Nigeria) For Reservations & tickets: 905-935-3535
June 15,16 CRC St. Thomas, Ont. celebrating 50th anniversary with picnic and service. Info: Jan Vandergeest 519-631-5285 or e-mail: jan@gtn.on.ca
June 19 Hollandse Dag 10 a.m. First CRC 310 Kingscourt Av. Kingston, Ont. Speaker: Jim Kooistra, Topic: "Bloei in de beste jaren" For info call 613-546-5615
June 22, 23 Blenheim CRC, Blenheim, Ont. celebrating 50th anniversary with dinner, social, and worship. Call 519-352-1772 or 519-674-2171 for info.
July 13,14 Lindsay CRC, Lindsay, Ont. celebrating 50th anniversary with dinner and service. For info Ph:705-328-0177. Fax:705-328-3156 or E-mail: lawilms@sympatico.ca

C.R.C. ST. THOMAS. ONTARIO.

The First Christian Reformed Church of St. Thomas, Ontario, will be celebrating its

50th anniversary June 15 and 16, 2002, D.V.

A picnic will be held in Waterworks Park, St. Thomas, June 15, beginning at 1.00 P.M. with dinner at 4.00 P.M., followed by a program in the Church on Elm Street at 7.30 P.M. A special worship service will be held to commemorate God's faithfulness to our congregation on Sunday, June 16 at 10.00 A.M. in the Church.

All friends and former members are cordially invited to celebrate this event with us.

Please contact Mr. Jan Vandergeest if you plan to attend.

Phone 519-631-5285 or E-Mail: jan@gtn.on.ca

CRC Williamsburg

The CRC of Williamsburg, Ontario, will be celebrating its 50th anniversary on June 1 & 2, 2002, D.V.

We plan to have an Open House on Sat., June 1, from 10-4 with a supper from 5-7, followed by a program of fun and remembering.

Special Worship Services will be held on Sunday at 9:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. with former pastors participating.

All friends and former members are kindly invited to join us in our celebration. For more information contact:

Anjo Norg, R.R. 2, Williamsburg, ON K0C 2H0
 Phone: 613-448-1555, e-mail: norgk@3web.net

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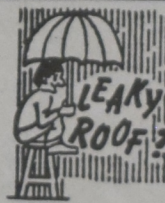
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News

Christian peacemakers keep working in Middle East, despite danger

Alan Doerksen

TORONTO — Although violence has been escalating in Israel and the Palestinian territories, Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) refuses to leave, and is actively engaged in peacemaking work in the region, even though its members sometimes put their lives on the line.

CPT is an agency set up by Mennonite, Brethren, and Friends Meetings churches, which works at active peacemaking through public witness and nonviolent action, often in political hotspots such as Israel and Colombia. Its motto is "Getting in The Way," which CPT Canadian co-ordinator Doug Pritchard explains means two things: "We get in the way physically, with our bodies, of violence", and CPT also strives to follow "Jesus' way of loving enemies and praying for those who persecute you."

For several years, CPT has been actively working in Hebron, a city in the Palestinian territories. But the increased violence has affected CPT's work. "Travel is considerably more difficult," observes Pritchard. Because of that, "we're not traveling as far afield. The needs are pretty overwhelming in the area near us"—that is, around Hebron.

Rather than reducing its work in the region, CPT is increasing it, Pritchard asserts. "We do spend a lot of time attempting to intercede" between Palestinians and Israelis. But recently, some CPT volunteers have been in life-threatening situations.

Volunteer faces gunfire

For instance, on April 9, CPTers Kathleen Kern and Greg Rollins tried to get to Dura a village of 10,000 near Hebron because the team heard that the town had been invaded in the night of March 4. When Rollins and Kern tried to approach a house with four armored personnel carriers (APCs) parked out front, they were ordered to retreat and shots were



CHRISTIAN PEACEMAKER TEAMS PHOTOS

CPT volunteer Kathleen Kern approaches Israeli armed forces.

fired over their heads, reports CPT's website.

Kern and Rollins then went with journalists to the top floor of a house overlooking Dura. A man there told them that his daughter was in the house with the APCs parked out front. The CPTers volunteered to approach the soldiers again and ask them to let the daughter and her children leave.

The two CPTers decided it was best for Kern to approach, since the soldiers would be less likely to shoot a woman. She borrowed a white headscarf from a local woman.

A soldier with an American accent repeatedly ordered Kern to leave and several shots were fired as a warning. She said that she wanted to help the family inside get out. The soldier told her there was no family inside. But Kern insisted that she had spoken to the woman's father and he was very worried about her. The soldier told her everyone was fine, reports CPT's website.

When Kern didn't leave, the soldier said several times, "Kathy, you are putting yourself in

danger." Kern replied, "Everyone here is in danger."

The soldier then said, "Kathy, you are making a fool of yourself. You are turning this into a circus." Kern said she would leave as soon as the family inside was released.

The soldier then told Kern to have a seat and wait for five minutes. After a while, he said the family was getting some medicine

and would be released, if Kern moved back about 50 metres behind a blue car. Kern said she would but asked which part of the U.S. he came from. He said that if she wanted the family released, she should not ask any more questions. The family was then released.

No CPT staff have been injured recently in the Middle East, says Pritchard. "We continue to thank God for that." Although Israel has been expelling some journalists and other foreigners, no CPT volunteers have been asked to leave the country, Pritchard explains. In fact, CPT has been sending several "delegations" of Canadian and American volunteers to the region, usually for two-week visits. The next delegation will leave May 24 to go to the region.

Another way CPT has shown support to local people in the Hebron region is by "accompanying civilians trying to get food and water," says Pritchard. Many civilians there have been facing water and food restrictions recently.

One important initiative the CPT continues to focus on is working with Israelis and Palestinians who are committed to nonviolence "to encourage the peacemakers on both sides," says Pritchard.

Looking for solutions

Looking at solutions to the escalating violence in Israel, Pritchard says, "The strategic message

from both Israeli and Palestinian peacemakers is the end of the occupation" by Israelis of Palestinian territories. Once Israel withdraws from those areas, "then there can be discussion of secure borders."

International pressure important

International pressure is important, too, but is not always listened to. Pritchard points out that the United Nations has passed more than 50 resolutions calling on Israel to withdraw from Palestinian territories, but has been ignored by Israel.

"The World Council of Churches (WCC) is preparing to send observers to the region," he notes. WCC started discussions about this after the U.S. vetoed an attempt by European countries to send UN observers to the region. Pritchard sees this as a good initiative.

But Pritchard is critical of the ongoing Oslo peace process, which he says is "headed toward carving up Palestinian territories" and leaving them to be under control of Israel, much like independent homelands in South Africa were controlled by the South African government under Apartheid.

The United States is "certainly a key player in the region," suggests Pritchard. The U.S. provides Israel with \$3 billion of support a year, and "much of that is military aid," he says. "The U.S. has been a longtime backer and a major contributor" to Israel.

Although President George W. Bush has spoken out publicly asking for Israel to withdraw from Palestinian territories, Israel has not done so, and there have been no consequences from the U.S., Pritchard observes.

One problem with the peace process is that Israel is much more powerful than the Palestinian state, contends Pritchard. "The Palestinian entity is increasingly weak politically.... To imagine a peace agreement between two unbalanced powers [is] a real challenge."

Pritchard believes the Canadian government should speak up more about this situation, as well. "Their voice has been muted. They suggest the violence has been equal," but there has been more violence from Israel, according to Pritchard. "Canada can be much more forthright.... using what moral authority we have in the world to call the Israelis to account."

In general, CPT tends to side with Palestinians and their concerns, rather than with Israelis.

News Digest

Pastor asks for graffiti

SPARKS, Nevada — The pastor of a new church has encouraged church members to write graffiti on its walls. Pastor Steven Bond of the Summit Christian Church in Sparks, Nev., said he got the idea from friends, and thinking it "was a really cool thing," invited the congregation, including youngsters, to participate in writing on the wooden walls of the new church, reported the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* online.

Even though all that graffiti soon will be covered over by drywall and insulation, members felt a deeper meaning and a stronger connection with the church. "This way, the Bible is stuck into the fabric of the building," the pastor noted. One teenager said, "It's kind of neat to think that what I wrote here will be here forever."

Plagiarizing ethics

OTTAWA (Reuters) — A group of Canadian engineering students took the art of cheating to its logical conclusion by plagiarizing an essay on ethics, embarrassed academics said recently. Donald Russell, associate dean at Ottawa's Carleton University, said he would be dealing with 31 students who had been caught submitting essays cribbed from the Internet.

"We're disappointed this has happened in the course on ethics," he told CBC television, noting that those involved could be suspended or even expelled.

Burglar delivers truth after pizza

STUART, Florida — A pizza was all it took for a suspect to deliver the truth to police in Stuart, Fla., reports *The Tribune*. For days, local detectives had gathered evidence on a suspected serial burglar and gun thief. They made the arrest, but he wouldn't talk.

The frustrated and hungry detectives began discussing a late-night dinner when the suspect made them an offer their stomachs couldn't refuse.

"If you buy me a pizza, I'll tell you everything I know," he told the authorities. A large pizza and a two-litre bottle of Coca-Cola later, Michael Camerota confessed to 50 car burglaries, selling guns and a host of other crimes, police said.

"Give me something that I can bite on," Detective Flamur Zenelovic told the suspect before the pizza was ordered. "From there on, it was like a changed person...."



Kathleen Kern talks to a journalist in the Hebron area.